CONCEPTS IN SIKHISM

Cognitive Psychology—Mind Map Approach

To Understanding Sikhism

For the

Second Generation Sikh Children

Compiled and Edited by

Dr. J. S. Mann, M.D.
&
Dr. S. S. Sodhi, Ph.D.

Address: 22 Woodbank Terrace
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada, B3M 3K4
Phone: (902) 443-3269

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AGAMPUR or **AGAMPURA**, (**Major Gurmukh Singh**) lit. city unapproachable or inaccessible (Skt. *Agamya* plus pur or pura). The word appears in one of the hymns of Guru Nanak in Asa measure where it is used to signify God's abode or the ultimate state or stage of spiritual enlightenment and bliss. Another term used synonymously in the same hymn is *nijaghar,* lit. one's own real home signifying the ultimate sphere of *jivatima*. The relevant stanza first raises the question: "Tell me how the city unapproachable is reached," followed by the answer, "By discarding such measures as *japu* (mechanical repetition of God's name), *tapu* (bodily mortification) and *hath nigrahi* (forced control of the senses)." Realizing the Guru's Word in practice is prescribed as the right path to *agampur* (GG, 436).

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M. G. S.

AHIMSA. (**L. M. Joshi**) The term *ahimsa* is formed by adding the negative prefix *a* to the word *himsa* which is derived from the Sanskrit root *han*, i.e. 'to kill', 'to harm', or 'to injure', and means not-killing, not-harming, not-injuring. The commonly used English equivalent 'non-violence' is inadequate as it seems to give a false impression that *ahimsa* is just a negative virtue. *Ahimsa* is not mere abstention from the use of force, not just abstention from killing and injuring; it also implies the positive virtues of compassion and benevolence because not-killing and not-injuring a living being implicitly amounts to protecting and preserving it and treating it with mercy. The commandment not to kill and not to offend any living being arises from a feeling of compassion and from a sense of respect for every sentient being. The injunction that one is defiled and becomes sinful by killing and harming a living being is a kind of warning to those who are heedless of the principle of compassion. It thus strengthens the doctrine of compassion and reinstates the sentiment of respect for life. The injunction that the practice of *ahimsa* is meritorious is likewise a kind of promise of reward to those who are compassionate and sensitive to all forms of sentient existence. *Ahimsa* may embrace a variety of motivation—compassion for living beings, earning religious merit, achieving self-purification and dread for the sinful consequences of violence and cruelty. For all these motives there is a scriptural authority in India.

In addition to the word *ahimsa*, we have at least three others yielding the same sense. In Emperor Ashoka's Rock Edict No. 4, we have *avihimsa* and *anarambha*, while in the old Pali canonical texts we have the phrase *panatipata veramani*. The word *avihimsa* is another form of the word *ahimsa*, non-killing, not-injuring, inoffensiveness, harmlessness, kindness, compassion, benevolence, and love. The word *anarambha* (or

analambha) means not-slaughtering (living beings in sacrificial rituals). The phrase *panatipata veramani* (Skt. *Pranatipata viratah*) means abstaining from destroying a living being.

It is now generally admitted that the principles of *ahimsa* originated outside the fold of the Vedic tradition. The non-Vedic ascetic sages, known as *munis* and *sramanas*, were perhaps the first teachers of the doctrines of *ahimsa* and *karuna* or compassion. However, its clear mention and its exposition as an important element in religious life are found only in the later Vedic age which is also the age of the earliest historical sramanas such as Parsvanatha, Kapilamuni, Kasyapa Buddha, Vardhamana, Mahavira and Sakyamuni Buddha. Parsvanatha (circa 750 BC) is known to have taught the fourfold moral restraint (*caturyama*) which included the practice of *ahimsa*.

On the other hand, however, the ancient Brahmanical literature gave only partial sanction to the practice of *ahimsa* and continued to respect the custom of slaughtering animals in sacrificial rituals. It shows that originally it was a principle peculiar to the Sramanic tradition. The slaughter of animals was, of course, prescribed by the rite, but the practical object of this slaughter was to admit animal flesh for food.

Sikhism accepts *ahimsa* as a positive value, and there are numerous hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, advising man to cultivate the ethical values of *daya* (compassion) and *prem* (love). It, however, does not accept *ahimsa* as a mere absence of *himsa* or violence. Love, justice, equality, self-respect and righteousness are some of the overriding social values to guarantee which even *himsa* would be permissible.

Sikhs' social and ethical values are all derived from their metaphysical doctrine. Sikhism believes in the unicity of God, who in His manifest form pervades the entire creation. Thus, all the created beings in this phenomenal world are his manifestation and intrinsically one with Him. This idea of inherent unity of being with the Supreme Being debars man from using *himsa* or violence against another being because that would amount to hurting the Divine. This ontological doctrine of divine unity is in Sikhism the basis of all positive values of *ahimsa* such as social equality, love, compassion, charity and philanthropy. Guru Arjan, in one of his hymns, adjures man "not to injure anyone so that thou mayst go to thy true home with honour." Mercy or compassion towards living beings is said to be equivalent in merit earned by pilgrimage to sixty-eight holy spots. This religious value attached to the practice of mercy affirms the principle of *ahimsa* . Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX, also says that one of the marks of a wise man is that he does not terrorize others nor does he allow himself to be terrorized by others.

The Sikh tradition is also replete with instances of sacrifices made for the sake of justice, righteousness and human freedom. Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down their lives to vindicate the right to freedom and religious belief. The creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X, and the use of sword as sanctioned by him were also to vindicate the same values. The positive values of *ahimsa* like compassion, love, universal brotherhood, freedom and self-respect must prevail. However, if these are violated, man must resist. When all peaceful methods for such resistance are exhausted, the use of sword, so says Guru Gobind Singh, is lawful (*Zafarnamah*, verse 22). The use of sword, however, is not for any personal gain or advancement; it has to be for the general good. Thus was the doctrine of *ahimsa*

reinterpreted. The Gurus affirmed their faith in its positive values, but if *himsa* became necessary to resist and defeat the forces violating these values, it was not considered antagonistic to *ahimsa*.

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L. M. J.

AKAL (**Wazir Singh**), lit. timeless, immortal, non-temporal, is a term integral to Sikh tradition and philosophy. It is extensively used in the *Dasam Granth* hymns by Guru Gobind Singh, who titled one of his poetic compositions *Akal Ustati* , i.e. In Praise (ustati) of the Timeless One (akal). However, the concept of Akal is not peculiar to the *Dasam* Granth. It goes back to the very origins of the Sikh faith. Guru Nanak used the term in the Mul Mantra, the fundamental creedal statement in the *Japu*, the first composition in the Guru Granth Sahib. The term also occurs in Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, who uses it in conjunction with *murat* in Siri Raga *chhants* (GG. 78) and in conjunction with purakh in Gauri Purabi Karhale (GG, 235). The term occurs more frequently in Guru Arjan's *bani* (e.g. GG, 99, 609, 916, 1079 and 1082). We encounter the use of the term *akal* in Kabir as well.

It may be noted that the term *akal* has been used in Gurbani in two forms: (a) as a qualifier or adjective, and (b) as a substantive. In the expression *akal murati*. The first part is often treated as a qualifier, even though some interpreters take the two words as independent units, viz. *akal* and *murati*. In the Maru Raka Kal and Akal have been clearly used as substantives by Guru Arjan and Kabir. Guru Gobind Singh more often than not treats the expression as a noun. *Akal Ustati* is the praise of Akal and "Hail, O Akal, Hail, O Kirpal!" of Japu also takes the related expressions as substantives. The meaning of Akal in this context is 'timeless', non-temporal', 'deathless', 'not governed by temporal process', or 'not subject to birth, decay and death'. This appears to be negative coining in each case. But the intent is affirmative. Akal as deathless or non-temporal implies everlasting reality, eternal being, or Transcendent Spirit; it further

implies Eternity, Being, or Essence. The linguistic form may be negative, but the semantic implication is unmistakably affirmative.

Guru Gobind Singh in his *Japu* in the *Dasam Granth*, has designated the Supreme Reality Akal. It is the same Reality that was given the epithet of *sati* in the Guru Granth Sahib. 'Sati' is the primordial name of the Eternal Being (GG, 1083). All the names that we utter in respect of God are functional or attributive names. The basic reality is nameless, in Guru Gobind Singh's terminology *anama*. But even the Nameless can serve as a name. When we say Brahman is featureless, 'featurelessness' becomes its feature. Nirankar (Formless) is a name, and so are other epithets so coined. To signify what they regard as the Eternal Spirit, beyond the pale of time, temporality or cosmic processes, the Gurus have chosen the terms *sati* and *akal*. Vahiguru is a positive *saguna* substitute for the negative *nirguna* term Akal.

Guru Gobind Singh's bani is a repository of concepts and terms, especially of the epithets relating to 'time'. Besides Kal and Akal, he uses Maha Kal (macro-time) and Sarb-Kal (all-time) to indicate a Being above and beyond the eventful times of the universe. For him, Kal itself is a dimension of Akal, the only difference being the process that characterizes temporal events, and the eternality of Akal. Every occurrence or event has a beginning and an end, each event is a link in the on-going process of Time. The cosmic drama or the wondrous show of the world is all a creation of Time. The power of Time controls worldly events; the only entity independent of time is Time itself, and that is Akal, the Timeless One. That is how God is both Time and Timeless in Guru Gobind Singh's *bani*. The temporal aspect of Time is the immanent aspect, the presence of Spiritual Essence in each worldly occurrence. It is the 'personality' of the Supreme,

the *chit* or consciousness of *sat-chit-anand*. The other, transcendent aspect, is the Eternal, the Beyond, the Inexpressible, the Fathomless, Nirguna Brahman, assigned the name Akal, the Timeless One or the One-beyond-Time.

Akal is not a fixed, unmoving substance, but the dynamic spiritual principle of the entire cosmic existence. The phenomenal world emanates from the Spirit, and the Spirit permeates the world. Akal in Sikh *weltanschauung* is not mere consciousness, bland and void, but is the Creative Spirit, as the expression Karta Purakh implies. In other words, creativity is the core of Akal. And it is creativity that is manifest in the dimension of Kal. Acting through Time, the Timeless One creates worlds and beings of the worlds. It is through creativity that the Timeless One transforms itself from *nirgun* to *sargun*, from the *aphur* state into *saphur* state, from the pre-creation *sunn*, or dormant essence, into cosmic existence.

The creativity of Akal is not confined to the timeless and temporal aspects of the Supreme. Through its *sargun facet* the *nirgun* assumes the character of the Divine, of the gracious God, the loving Lord or Prabhu of the devotees. From 'It' the Ultimate becomes 'He', the person with whom communication is sought and established. From 'Akal', He becomes 'Sri-Akal'. The Sikh slogan and popular form of greeting *Sati Sri Akal* Sikh sums up the concept that the timeless Being is the singular Eternal Reality. The phrase combines the concepts of Sati and Akal, implying that the Eternal and the Timeless are one; Sati, itself is the Everlasting Lord-beyond-Time. Thus, the creative essence turns the metaphysical Being into active principle of the world, into conscious Power involved in the cosmic process, into Hero or Master of the world, cherishing His creation with benign joy. Being the beneficent Lord, He lends some of His creativity to the created

beings. Humanity draws its creativity and creative energy from the Divine reservoir of creativity.

Valour and heroism are pronounced characteristics of the Sikh tradition. The Akal of Guru Gobind Singh is All Steel (*Sarb-Loh*), symbolically applauding valour. Guru Nanak had applied the epithet of Jodha-Mahabali-Surma to the valiant in *Japu*, 27 (GG, 6). Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X, expresses His creativities with terms such as Sarb-Kal (*Japu*, 19, 20), Sarb-Dayal (*Japu,* 19, 23, 28), Sarb-Pal (*Japu*, 28, 45). He calls Him Glorious and great, Super-form, Yogi of yogis, Moon of moons, Melody of melodies, Rhythm of the dance, Liquidity of waters, Movement of the winds. He is Akal as well as Kripal, the Compassionate Lord. In fact, the whole composition of *Japu*, with its wide range of attributive names for the Timeless Being focuses on the Akal-Kripal unipolarity. The impersonal appears through all persons, the Timeless encompasses all temporal beings emanating from His Essence. He transcends the human world, yet He is full of compassion for all. His timeless essence permeates the temporal existence.

The concept of Akal, central to Guru Gobind Singh's *Japu* has percolated to the social, political and cultural aspects of Sikh life. Inspired by its theme, they call the Gurus', *bani Akali-Bani*. The political wing of the community is known as Akali Dal. The slogan *Sati Sri Akal* has become a form of greeting for the Punjabis in general. The process had been initiated much earlier, half a century before the advent of Guru Gobind Singh on the scene. The Sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, had already identified the throne built at Amritsar as Akal Takht—the Throne of the Timeless one.

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W. S.

AKAL MURATI (**Wazir Singh**), a composite term comprising *akal* (non-temporal) and *murati (*image or form), occurring in the Mul-Mantra, the root formula or fundamental creed of the Sikh faith as recorded at the beginning of the *Japu,* composition with which the Guru Granth Sahib opens, literally means 'timeless image'. Elsewhere in the compositions of Guru Ram Das (GG, 78), and Guru Arjan (GG, 99, 609, 916 and 1082), the expression Akal Murati reinforces the original meaning of Divine Reality that is beyond the process of time, and yet permeates the cosmic forms. The non-temporal Being transcends the space-time framework and, as such, is Formless. However, in its manifest aspect, the same Being assumes the cosmic Form. The Sikh vision of God combines the Formless and its expression in natural forms, the transcendent and the immanent, the essence (spirit) and existence (creation).

The expression 'Akal Murati' lends itself to interpretation in two ways. The exegetes, who treat it as one term, take *akal* in the adjectival form that qualifies the substantive *murati*, the whole expression implying Everlasting Form equivalent to the Supreme Being. Those approaching the pair *akal* and *murati* severally, treat both the units independently, each expressing an attribute of the Divine Reality, believed to transcend time and space, yet manifest in spacio-temporal forms. But, despite the divergence of approach, both interpretations agree in substance, i.e. the featureless eternal Reality assumes features and modes of empirical existence. To put it differently, 'Akal Murati' presents a synthesis of *nirgun* and *sagun* facets of the Absolute-God of Guru Nanak's vision. It however does not embrace the notion of incarnation. Non-incarnation is a basic theological postulate of Sikhism.

See **AKAL**.

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W. S.

AMAR PAD (**Major Gurmukh Singh**) or *amarapad*, also called *paramapada* (highest step), *turiapada* or *turiavastha*, is the stage of deathlessness or immortality. In the Guru Granth Sahib the term has been used for the highest stage of spiritual enlightenment which is also the highest state of self-realization, the equivalent of God-realization. This is the stage of ultimate release.

See **MUKTI** and **JIVAN-MUKT**.

M. G. S.

AMRITDHARI (**Piara Singh Sambhi**) (*amrit*, lit. nectar, commonly Sikh sanctified initiatory water+ *dhari*=practitioner) is one who has received baptismal vows of the Khalsa initiated by Guru Gobind Singh (30 March 1699) and abides by them and by the *panj kakari rahi,* distinctive insignia introduced by the Guru on that day comprising five symbols each beginning with the Gurmukhi letter " ਕ " (pronounced "kakka") or its Roman equivalent "k". These are kes (long unshorn hair and beard), *kangha* (a comb to keep the hair tidy), *kirpan* (a sword), *kara* (a steel bracelet worn about the wrist), and *kachh* (short breeches worn by soldiers).

See **PAHUL**.

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P. S. S.

ANAHATA-SABDA (**L. M. Joshi**) figures variously in the Guru Granth Sahib as *anahada-sabad, anahada-tura, anahada-jhunkara, anahada-bain, anahata-nada, anahada-bani* and anahada-*dhuni* and in the *Dasam Granth* as *anahada-bani* and *anahada-baja*. The word *anahata* is from the Sanskrit language. It occurs in Pali and Prakrit texts as well. In the Sanskrit original, it implies unstruck; it stands for pure or immaculate in Pali and for eternal in the Prakrit. The suffix words like *sabad* or *sabda, tura, jhunkara, bani* and *dhuni* stand for word, rhythm, sound or speech. Thus, *anahata-sabda* would mean the unstruck or pure eternal sound. In a theistic system, *anahata-sabda* would signify an eternal voice symbolizing the reality of God. Indeed, Kabir uses the word *anahata* as an epithet of God who is of the form of Light (*joti sarupa anahata*). This interpretation is paralleled in Guru Nanak's *Japu* where he refers to God, the Creator, as the original, the pure, the beginningless and the eternal (*adi anilu anadi anathati*). The Gurus have employed almost all the technical terms of Tantra and Hathayoga first used by the *siddhas, nathas* and *yogis*, but they have, at the same time, re-evaluated and reinterpreted these doctrines and practices. However, the former were neither theistic in outlook or bhaktik in practice: their path was chiefly that of ascetic yogis. On the other hand, Sikhism believes in the non-dual dynamic reality realizable through bhakti or loving devotion. Thus, the concept of *anahata-sabda* in Sikhism had to be understood in the light of the Sikh concept of Reality which cannot be realized through tantric or *hathayoga* methods, but through *nam-simran*, i.e. constant remembrance of His Name—*hari ki katha anahad bani* (GG, 483). In the Sikh ontological view, this mystic sound (*anahati-sabda*) has no meaning if it does not relate to the glory of God. The use of tantric and hathayogic terminology has to be given a

theistic and devotional content to understand it fully in the Sikh context. In Sikhism, the mystic sound in itself is not of much significance, but what matters is the source of this sound. Unlike the *hathayogis* who believed that the source of this sound (nada or sabda) is the *kundalini* passing through the *susumna*, the Sikh scripture declares that he who strikes the instrument and produces the sound is no other than God. It is the constant mindfulness of God (*nam simran*) which has to be made the life-breath (*prana-pavana*) of the devotee; controlling his left and right nerves (*ida* and *pingala*), he cultivates the central nerve (*susumna*), and then starts the reverse process by turning the life-breath upwards. When this life-breath made by *nam-simran* passes in the reverse order through the *susumna*, it pierces all the six plexuses on its upward march and it then settles in the void (*ultat pavan chakra khatu bhede surati sunn anaragi*—GG, 333). The Gurus are not concerned with the details of *nadis, cakras,* and *kundalini*; their central concern is to bear the eternal sound signalling the omnipresence of the Almighty. When this is achieved, by the grace of God (*gurprasadi*) the self realizes its innate nature spontaneously (*sahaja-subhai*), enjoys the innate bliss (*sahaja-sukha*), becomes free (*nirmala*) of all impurities, merges into the emptiness trance (*sunna-samadhi*) and attains supreme peace (*nirban pada*) which characterizes the fourth station (*chautha pada*). It is not necessary to stress that the *anahata-sabda* heard by the released sages is not a physical sound to be heard with the physical ears. One has to 'kill' one's sinful existence and live an immaculate existence called *jivan-mukti*; then alone can one hear the *anahada-bani*.

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L. M. J.

ASCETICISM (**L. M. Joshi**), derived from the Greek word *askesis*, connotes the 'training' or 'exercise' of the body and the mind. Asceticism or ascetic practices belong to the domain of religious culture, and fasts, pilgrimages, ablutions, purificatory rituals, vigils, abstinence from certain foods and drinks, primitive and strange dress, nudity, uncut hair, tonsure, shaving the head, circumcision, cave-dwelling, silence, meditation, vegetarianism, celibacy, virginity, inflicting pain upon oneself by whips and chains, mutilation, begging alms, owning no wealth or possessions, forbearance and patience, equanimity or impartiality towards friends and foes, eradication of desires and passions, treating the body as something evil or treating human life as a means of achieving ultimate release or union with God—all these are subsumed under ascetic practices.

The history of Indian religiousness presents the ultimate in the development of the theory and practice of asceticism. Evidence of the existence of ascetic practices in India has come down to us from the most ancient period of known history; archaeology and literature have documented its growth as a pan-Indian religious phenomenon; all the systems of religious thought that have ever appeared on the soil of India have been influenced in varying degrees by the philosophy and terminology of asceticism. Ancient Indian literature abounds in ascetic terminology and there are numerous terms which refer to ascetics or to diverse ascetic practices. *Muni, yati, bhiksu, yogin, sramana, tapasvin, tapas, mundaka, parivrajaka, dhyanin, sannyasin, tyagin, vairagin, atita, udasina, avadhuta, digambara,* etc. are terms frequently used in Indian religious tradition.

Non-theistic systems such as Jainism, Buddhism and Sankhya-Yoga provide instances of ascetic culture in its classical form. All these Sramanic systems of faith are

predominantly ascetic though their philosophical theories place varying degrees of emphasis on bodily *askesis*. Forms of asceticism differ in Jainism and Buddhism, the former being an extreme instance of it. Asceticism is the heart of Jaina *caritra* or *acara* which, along with *jnana* and *darsana*, constitutes the way of *moksa*.

In the Buddhist form of asceticism, there is no metaphysical dualism of God and the world, or of soul and the body. Phenomenal existence is viewed as characterized by suffering, impermanence and not-self. The aim of ascetic culture is to go beyond this sphere of conditioned phenomena. The keynote of Buddhist ascetic culture is moderation; self-mortification is rejected altogether; *tapas* is a form of excess which increases *dukkha*. The aim of ascetic effort is to secure freedom from suffering; this ascetic effort is to be made within the framework of the Middle Way.

Among all schools of Indian ascetics the *guru* or preceptor is held in the highest esteem. No one becomes an ascetic without receiving formal initiation (*diksa*) or ordination (*pravargya*) at the hands of a recognized teacher who is himself an ascetic of standing. Practice of various kinds of physical postures (*asanas*), meditation, study of Scriptures, devotional worship, discussion on subjects of religious and philosophical, importance, going on pilgrimage to holy places, giving instruction to the laity, accepting gifts of dress materials and food-stuff, and radiating good will and a sense of religiousness and piety, are the usual facets of the life of Indian ascetics. Ascetic way of life, in any religion is the way of self-mortification. Injury to others is however disallowed. But Sikhism which of course emphasizes the importance of non-violence never lets this dogma to humiliate man as a man and accepts the use of force as the last resort. Says Guru Gobind Singh in the *Zafarnamah: chu kar az hamah hilte dar*

guzasht/halal astu burdan ba shamshir dast (22). Sikhism denies the efficacy of all that is external or merely ritualistic. Ritualism which may be held to be a strong pillar of asceticism has been held as entirely alien to true religion.

Sikhism which may be described as *pavrtti marga* (way of active activity) over against *nivrtti marga* (way of passive activity or renunciation) enjoins man to be of the world, but not worldly. Non-responsible life under the pretext of ascetic garb is rejected by the Gurus and so is renunciation which takes one away to solitary or itinerant life totally devoid of social engagement. Says Guru Nanak: "He who sings songs about God without understanding them; who converts his house into a mosque in order to satisfy his hunger who being unemployed has his ears pierced (so that he can beg); who becomes a *faqir* and abandons his caste; who is called a *guru* or *pir* but goes around begging—never fall at the feet of such a person. He who eats what he has earned by his own labour and yet gives some (to others)—Nanak, it is he who knows the true way" (GG, 1245). Here one may find the rejection of asceticism and affirmation of disciplined worldliness. A very significant body of the fundamental teachings of the Gurus commends non-attachment, but not asceticism or monasticism.

The necessity of controlling the mind and subduing one's egoity is repeatedly taught. All the virtues such as contentment (*santokh*), patience (*dhiraja*), mercy (*daya*), service (*seva*), liberality *(dana)*, cleanliness (*snana*), forgiveness (*ksama*), humility (*namrata*), non-attachment (*vairagya*) and renunciation (*taiga*), are fundamental constituents of the Sikh religion and ethics. On the other hand, all the major vices or evils that overpower human beings and ruin their religious life, such as anger (*krodha*), egoism (*ahankara*), avarice (*lobha*), lust (*kama*). Infatuation (*moha*), sinful acts (*papa*),

pride (*man*), doubt (*duvidha*), ownership (*mamata*), hatred (*vair*), and hostility (*virodh*) are condemned. Man is exhorted to eradicate them but certainly not through ascetic self-mortification. *Sahaj* is attained through tension-free, ethical living, grounded in spirituality.

In Sikhism all forms of asceticism are disapproved and external or physical austerities, devoid of devotion to God, are declared futile. An ascetic sage who is liberated from all evil passions is called *avadhuta* in Indian sacred literature. Guru Nanak reorientates the concept of *avadhuta* in purely spiritual terms as against its formularies. The sign of an *avadhuta* is that "in the midst of aspirations he dwells bereft of aspirations" *suni machhindra audhu nisani/asa mahi nirasu valae/nihachau Nanak karate pae*" (GG, 877). An ascetic is defined again as "one who burns up his egoity, and whose alms consist in enduring hardships of life and in purifying his mind and soul. He who only washes his body is a hypocrite" (GG, 952).

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L. M. J.

BHAGAUTI (**J. S. Neki, Giani Balwant Singh**) or Bhavani (Skt. Bhagavati, consort of Visnu, or the goddess Durga) has had in Sikh usage a chequered semantic history. In early Sikhism, especially in the compositions comprising the Guru Granth Sahib, the word means a *bhakta* or devotee of God. "So *bhagauti jo bhagvantai janai*; he alone is a true devotee who knoweth the Lord" (GG, 88). In Bhai Gurdas, *bhagauti* has been used as an equivalent of sword. "*Nau bhagauti lohu gharaia*—iron (a lowly metal) when properly wrought becomes a (powerful) sword"(Varan, XXV. 6) It is in the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh contained in the *Dasam Granth* that the term began to assume connotations of wider significance. Reference may here be made especially to three poems by Guru Gobind Singh—*Chandi Chritra Ukti Bilas* and *Chandi Chritra* both in Braj and Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki, popularly called Chandi di Var in Punjabi—describing the exploits of the Hindu goddess (Bhagavati) Chandi or Durga.

Each of these compositions is a free translation of “Sapt Sati (lit. seven hundred), meaning the epic comprising 700 *slokas*, chapter xiv, sub-sections 81-94, of the classical *Markandeya Purana* which describes the battle between the goddess and demons whom she vanquished to reinstall Indra, the king of gods, on his throne. The heroic odes in fact are among many pieces of Pauranic (mythological) literature that Guru Gobind Singh translated or got translated for the avowed purpose of instilling martial spirit among his Sikhs.

The title of *Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki*, which has also been appropriated into Sikh *ardas* or supplicatory prayer, along with the first stanza runs as follows:

Ik onkar sri vahiguru ji ki fateh

God is one—To Him belongs the victory

Sri bhagauti ji sahe

May Sri Bhagauti Ji be always on our side

Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki Patshahi 10

The ode of Sri Bhagauti as sung by the Tenth Master.

The opening line of the Ode reads:

Pritham bhagauti simari kai gur nanak lain dhiai:

First call up Bhagauti in your mind, then meditate on Guru Nanak.

Here, the primacy accorded Sri Bhagauti Ji is obvious. This leads to the question why.

Bhagauti is, it appears, a multifaceted archetypal symbol employed by Guru Gobind Singh to fulfill a multiplicity of functions simultaneously. He perhaps wanted to complement the exclusive masculinity of the Divine image. Until then, God had in Sikhism as in other major traditions by and large a masculine connotation. He had been called *Purakh* implying masculinity. Although, at times, He had been addressed as *mata* (mother) as well as *pita* (father), almost all the names employed for him in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib—Ram, Govind, Hari, Shiv, Allah, etc.—were only masculine names. To widen the conception Guru Gobind Singh may have chosen Bhagauti, a name with a clear feminine implication. It is significant that in the entire Hindu pantheon the warrior Bhagavati, or Durga, is the only goddess without a male spouse, thus symbolizing female independence, strength and valour. This derives further support from Guru Gobind Singh's autobiographical *Bachitra Natak* wherein he designated God by a composite name *Mahakal-Kalika* (Mahakal which is masculine is juxtaposed to Kalika which is feminine). More specifically, what is really meant by Bhagauti (or its synonym *Bhavani*) is made clear in the following verse of Guru Gobind Singh:

Soi bhavani nam kahai

Jin sagri eh srishti upai

The One who created this universe entire,

Came to be known as Bhavani

--Chaubis Autar

Notwithstanding the fact that names of the deities from many diverse sources occur in the Sikh text, here they mix naturally shedding, after acculturation in the new religious and theological environs, their original nuances and proclaiming one and one identity alone, i.e. God the Singular Being. All other meanings and shades are subsumed into One Indivisible entity. The names Hari (originally Visnu), Keshav (also an epithet of Visnu—one with long hair), Damodar (Krsna who had a rope tied around his belly), Murli Manohar (also Krsna, master of the melodious flute), Raghupati (Rama, the Lord of Raghu dynasty), etc., all came to signify in the Sikh vortex the unitary Godhead. The same applied to *Bhagauti*.

Says Guru Gobind Singh in the second stanza of this poem, *Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki,* the following about Bhagauti:

Taihi durga saji kai daita da nasu karaia:

It was you who created Durga to destroy the demons.

The line establishes beyond ambiguity the contextual meaning of *bhagauti*. Durga could not be presumed to have created Durga. She like all other gods and goddesses was indeed created by God Almighty.

The nomenclature seems to have been employed to smoothen the gender distinctions when referring to God.

The second archetypal significance of Bhagauti is linked to its other lexical meaning ‘sword’ as exemplified by Bhai Gurdas. Bhagauti where prefixed with the

honorific sri (lid. fortunate, graceful) signifies the 'Divine Sword' –the Power that brings about the evolution and devolution of the Universe.

In this kaleidoscopic universe, its Creator is immanent not in any static way. He is in all times and at all places dynamically protecting the good and destroying the evil (*Sant ubaran, dusht uparan*). "Everywhere through the great perplexed universe, we can see the flashing of 'His Sword'! . . . and that must mean His nature uttering itself in His Own Form of forces (Phillip Brooks). That Sri Bhagauti, the Divine Sword, symbolizes Divine Power is further borne out in the Ode itself when about Bhagauti it is said:

Khanda prithmai saji kai jin sabh sasaru upaia

Brahma bisan mahes saji kudrati da khelu rachai banaia

Sindh parbat medani binu thamma gagani rahaia

Creating first the Power of Destruction, who brought forth the whole universe,

Who raised the trinity of the gods, and spread the game of nature,

The Ocean, the mountains, the earth and the firmament without support who shaped. . .

The invocation to the Almighty through His image as the 'Divine Sword' as employed by Guru Gobind Singh purported again to instill the heroic spirit among his Sikhs, for:

Jeha sevai teho hovai

You become like the one you adore.

(GG. 549)

Here a question arises: What is the special significance of remembering God with the name of a weapon? God is Pure Existence (*sat*), Absolute Essence (*nam*). Existence-

Essence (*sat-nam*) is His primordial, archetypal, designation (GG, 1083). Whatsoever else is said to designate Him can only be symbolic. Though God is infinite, these symbols can only be finite. While the infinite includes the finite, it also transcends it. That is why every such symbol is not only affirmed by the symbolized but also negated at the same time. In the Sikh mystic lore, the prime symbol employed for God is the Word (*nam*). However, the other, even more structured symbol that Guru Gobind Singh introduced is the "the Sword' (Bhagauti). One might here ask: can a fragment of the finite symbolize infinite? The answer can be given in the affirmative for God being Pure Existence is immanent in everything that exists. Hence symbolization of God through a finite symbol 'Sword' is not only possible, but also, in a sense, true because it serves to symbolize Divine Power. Every mystic symbol is bipolar. On the one end it is in contact with the Infinite, at the other in contact with the finite. That is how it succeeds in fulfilling the symbolic function. Bhagauti is one such symbol as it is in its symbolic meaning of Divine Power, in contact with the Infinite, and in its concrete form, as a weapon, in contact with the finite. Guru Gobind Singh has consecrated not only the sword, but in fact a whole spectrum of weaponry:

As kirpan khando kharag tupak tabar aru tir

Saif sarohi saihthi, yahai hamarai pir:

The sword, the sabre, the scimitar, the axe, the musket, the shaft.

The rapier, the dagger, the spear: these indeed are our saints.

Remembering God through such heroic symbols was the exclusive style of Guru Gobind Singh.

Already in *gurbani*, the theistic symbol of the Nigam (Vedic) tradition had been monotheized. Guru Gobind Singh chose to monotheize even the theistic symbols of the Agam (Brahmanic) tradition. Thus his was a process of the integration of the two great mystical traditions of India.

Finally, the word *bhagauti* stands for God or His devotee on the one hand (signifying *piri*), for the sword on the other (signifying *miri*). This integration of *piri* and *miri* in *Bhagauti* encapsulates another major dimension of Sikh thought.

J. S. N.

G. B. S.

BHAKTI (**J. S. Neki**): The word *bhakti* is derived from Skt. *Bhaj*, meaning to serve, honour, revere, love and adore. In the religious idiom, it is attachment or fervent devotion to God and is defined as "that particular affection which is generated by the knowledge of the attributes of the Adorable One."

The concept is traceable to the Vedas where its intimations are audible in the hymns addressed to deities such as Varuna, Savitra and Usha. However, the word *bhakti* does not occur there. The word occurs for the first time in the Upanisads where it appears with the co-doctrines of grace and self-surrender (*prapatti*) (e.g. *Svetasvatar*, I, V. 23). The *Bhagavadgita* attempts to expound *bhakti* in a systematic manner and puts *bhakti marga* in juxtaposition with *karma marga* and *jnana marga* as one of the three means of attaining liberation. The *Nardiya Sutra*, however, decrees that "*bhakti* is superior even to *karma, jnana* and *yoga*.

*Bhakt*i took strong roots in South India where generations of Alvar (Vaisnavite) and Nayanar (Saivite) saints had sung their devotional lyrics and founded their respective schools of *bhakti* between AD 200-900. It came to north India much later. "The Dravid country is the birthplace of *bhakti* school; *bhakti* became young in Karnataka, it grew old in Maharashtra and Gujrat, but when it arrived in Vrindavana, it became young again." Munshi Ram Sharma: *Bhakti Ka Vikas*. P. 353.

In the north, the cult was essentially Vaisnava-based, but instead of being focussed on Visnu, it chose to focus itself on Visnu's human incarnations, Rama and Krsna, the respective *avatars* or deities central to the two epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. For *bhakti* now Visnu's incarnations (Rama and Krsna) were the direct objects of devotion. Adoration of the devotees was focussed on them in association with

their *respective* consorts: Sita with Rama; and Rukmini, his wedded wife, or Radha, his Gopika companion, with Krsna. Images of these deities and their consorts installed in temples were worshipped. The path of bhakti was not directly accessible to the lower castes; for them the path of *prapatti* (unquestioned self-surrender) was prescribed. Singing of *bhajans* and dancing formed an important part of this worship. The dancers were *deva-dasis* (female slaves of the deity) inside the temple, but *nagar-badhus* (public wives) outside. Apart from being overwhelmingly ritualistic, the worship tended to be intensely emotional, frenzied and even erotic.

An important influence in north Indian *bhakti* was Ramanand whose many disciples including, Kabir, Ravidas, Pipa, Sadhana and Sainu radicalized the Bhakti movement. Kabir, out of them, was the most eloquent and outspoken. Besides *bhakti*, other influences which shaped him were Sufism and Buddhism. He repudiated *avatarvad*, social ideology of caste, ritualistic formalism and idol-worship, all of which were integral parts of traditional Vaisnavite *bhakti*. Kabir even questioned the authority of the Vedas and Puranas.

Sikhism undoubtedly accepted some of the aspects of radicalized *bhakti*, and admitted some of its practices into its own ordained set. It did lay down spiritual love, as the way to the deity, but the deity to be worshipped was neither Siva nor Visnu nor even any of their incarnations, nor any of the gods or goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. It was the One and the Only God, the Lord of Universes who was at once transcendent (nirguna) and immanent (*saguna*). Although immanent in His Creation He was yet apart from it, being its Creator. Since he inhered in the world that He had created, the world could not be considered unreal or illusory (*mithya* or *maya)*. It was real and sacred ("the abode of

the True One"). It is therefore blasphemous to renounce it in quest of God. "He that is immanent in the Universe resides also within yourself. Seek, and ye shall find" (GG 695). Renunciation of the world as a spiritual pursuit thus stood totally rejected. Celibacy was no longer countenanced, either. Full participation in life in a spirit of 'detachment' was prescribed instead. "Of all the religious rules and observances *grihasthya* (the homestead) is supreme. It is from here that all else is blessed" (GG, 587). Guru is paramount in *bhakti* as well as in Sikhism.

The ideal that Bhakti laid down for man was to achieve personal release (*moksha* or *mukti*). In Sikhism the ideal was stated in these terms: "I long not for a kingdom or for *mukti* but only for the lotus feet of the Lord" (GG 534). In the Sikh faith the highest ideal is to be able cheerfully to accept the will of God (*raza, bhana*) and to live one's life it its dynamic mould, to be ready to give oneself to carrying out what ought to happen. This concept of Divine Will (*hukam*) as well as the injunction to accept it cheerfully is peculiar to Sikhism. Also, whereas the ultimate aim of *bhakti* is for the individual to attain personal liberation, the Sikh ideal is well-being of all (*sarbatt ka bhala*),

The modes of worship in Bhakti cults included not only *bhajan* (adoration) and *kirtan* (singing praises of the deity), but also Yogic *upasana* (literally, to sit beside, to meditate), Vedic sacrifices, Brahmanical ritualism and Tantric practices. Of these, Sikhism retains only *bhajan* and *kirtan* and disclaims the rest. It categorically rejects sacrificial rites. The only sacrifice it approves of is self-sacrifice for the sake of righteousness. Sikhism strongly censures idol-worship. Instead, *sabda* (the Divine Word) is determined to be the focus of all adoration. However, as in *bhakti, nam* (Logos) is both the object and means of adoration of God

Thus, *bhakti* has been radically transformed and redefined in Sikhism. Sikhism is in fact much wider than *bhakti* both in its conceptual gamut as well as in practice. For the Bhakti cults, *bhakti* is the be-all and end-all of everything; for Sikhism two other crucially important ends are ethical living and spiritual liberation. The cultivation of moral qualities, in Sikhism, is the requisite precondition for *bhakti*. "Without morality *bhakti* is not practicable (GG, 4). Moral discipline is considered a vehicle for attaining nearness to God. "It is by our deeds that we become closer to God or become distant from Him" (GG, 6).

While the *bhagats'* sole stress was on *bhakti* or loving devotion, the Gurus also wanted to inculcate along with love and faith the spirit of fearlessness and valour among the Sikhs. A Sikh was to "overcome all fear by cherishing the Fearless Lord" (GG, 293). "He must not terrorize anyone, nor must he submit to anyone's fear" (GG, 1427). He was "to be subservient to none but the True Lord" (GG 473). He was not to be a quietist ascetic but a valiant saint ready to "battle in open field" (GG 931) to destroy the tyrants; In their scheme of ethical dynamism the Gurus gave priority to zeal for freedom.

Sikhs were not only given *nam* (Logos) as the symbol of the Formless One (which they shared with the *bhaktas*) but were also given *kirpan* (sword) as the symbol of the Fearless One. Sikhism, thus addressed itself to dual ideals, the other-worldly (*piri*) as well as this-worldly (*miri*).

Since Fatherhood of God was the basic Sikh tenet, brotherhood of man *ipso facto* became its social corollary. No one was to be reckoned low or high –"Reckon the entire mankind as One" (Akal Ustati, 15.85) was the Guru's precept. Most of the *bhakti* cults also decried inequality, and especially condemned caste-distinctions, giving the right of

worship to the low caste. However, service continued to be a menial pursuit, and manual labour was looked upon as the job of the lowly. The Gurus went further than just proclaiming the equality of man. They established dignity of labour, by making social service (*seva)* as an important vehicle of spiritual advancement. "The hands and feet sans *seva* are condemnable; actions other than *seva* are fruitless" (Bhai Gurdas, Varan, XXVII. 10). Begging is taboo for the Sikhs. While *bhaktas* could live on alms and public charity, not so a Sikh. He is ordained to earn his living by the honest labour of his hands (*kirt*) and share his earnings with others. It rehearsed in the fifteenth century the ideology of fraternity, equality and liberty. Devotion was defined as a positive phenomenon. Full-faced participation in life was recommended. In the time and space setting, *bhakti* and Sikhism lie close to each other which has led some to describe Sikhism as an offshoot of *bhakti*.

Like the *bhaktas* and the Sufis, Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, proclaimed the love of God and, through it, communion with Him as the primary aim of man. More like the former, he repudiated caste and the importance of ritualism, and in common with the latter, emphasized submission to God's will as the ultimate means of realization. Agreeably to the atmosphere created by Bhakti and Sufism, he rejoiced in singing praises of the Almighty and indicated the way to reconciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims. He brought to these general tendencies the force and urgency of a deeply inspired and forward-looking faith. He added elements which were characteristically his own and which empowered current trends with wholly new possibilities of fulfilment. Life in all of its different aspects was the subject of Guru Nanak's attention. Integral to his intuition was an awareness of the ills and errors of society and his concern to remedy

these. This was in contrast to the attitude of escape implicit in Bhakti and Sufism. Guru Nanak did not admit, like many of their protagonists, the possibility of man ever attaining, in his mystical progress, equality with Divinity. He also did not share the Bhaktas' belief in incarnation or the Sufis' insistence on bodily mortification and frenzied singing and dancing to bring about spiritual illumination. The faith begins with the revelation brought to light by Guru Nanak. To understand Sikhism fully the study of the totality of its tenet and of what impact it made on history will be very vital. In this perspective, the precept he preached is definitively the starting-point of Sikhism and not *bhakti* or any other cult.

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J. S. N.

BHANA (**Wazir Singh**), Lit. liking, pleasure, will, wish or approval, is one of the key-concepts in Sikh thought. In Sikhism, it refers specifically to God's will and pleasure. *Raza*, an Arabic term popular in the context of various schools of Sufi thought, also appears frequently in the Sikh texts to express the concept of *bhana*. According to this concept, the Divine Will is at the base of the entire cosmic existence. It was His *bhana*, His sweet will which was instrumental in the world's coming into being: "Whenever He pleases He creates the expanse (of the world of time and space) and whenever He desires He (again) becomes the Formless One (all by Himself)" (GG. 294). All our actions, our pain and pleasure, our worship, penance and self-discipline, metapsychosis and liberation, heaven and hell, are subject to *bhana* (GG. 963).

Bhana or *raza*, the Divine Will, expresses itself through *hukum*, the Divine Law of nature. *Bhana* and *hukum* are closely related and are often used synonymously. In the very first stanza of *Japu*, Guru Nanak uses *hukam* and *raza* as a compound term. There, is, however, a subtle difference between the two concepts. *Hukam* is the Divine Law while *bhana* is the Divine Will. The latter is the source of and sanction behind the former; "*Hukam* is that which you desire" (GG, 17). *Hukam* is the medium and instrument of the expression and operation of *bhana*. The basic idea implicit in *hukum* is its imperative and unimpeachable nature to which man must submit, but such submission is again subject to His *bhana*. "When He desires He makes man to submit to *hukum*" (GG, 337)" "In His Will, the Lord makes man submit to His command" (GG, 1093).

The inexorable *hukam* having its source in *bhana*, it follows that the latter is equally, even more, inescapable and inevitable subject only to itself in the form of nadar (q.v.). It therefore becomes the duty of man to submit to the Divine Will willingly and

gracefully. Submission to *raza* is thus inherent in the concept of *bhana*. *Bhana* in the Sikh tradition yields primarily the meaning of Divine Will itself, though taking equal cognizance of the other meaning, viz. the attitude of submission on man's part to the Will Divine. The latter itself arises out of God's Will or Grace. In this sense, i.e. *bhana* as attitude of submission of itself, is defined in *gurbani* as a great gift. As says Guru Arjan, "The truth is that there is no gift as great as *bhana* (submission to the Lords' Will)". (GG, 1093); says Guru Amar Das, "On whomsoever Thou bestoweth *bhana*, to him Thy Will is pleasing" (GG, 1064).

The Divine Will in the sense of inexorable ordinance or law of nature is intimately related to the problem of determinism versus free will. If nothing happens or can happen without the Divine Will, there would be no place for ethics and moral responsibility of man for his actions, good or bad, whereas the Sikh precept keeps reminding man to make the choice: to become acceptable at His portal or remain recalcitrant. Making a choice is a volitional act and pursuing it involves freedom of action. Thus Sikhism positing active participation in life does recognize freedom of action, but "within the contingencies of his finitude." In this context, the Sikh is required correctly to understand what pleases God, what is His pleasure (*bhana*). Concentrated attention to and meditation upon the Guru's word helps him in such understanding. Guided by his understanding of *bhana*, the Sikh is not only free to act but is required to participate, "to battle on in open field with his mind fully in control" (GG, 931). He is supposed to quell his *haumai* (I-ness), to dedicate his actions to the Lord's Will and to surrender himself to His *raza* regards the outcome of his actions.

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W. S.

BHOG (**Noel Q. King**) (which by literal etymology, from Sanskrit, signifies "pleasure," "delight") is the name used in the Sikh tradition for the group of observances which accompany the reading of the concluding parts of Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. This conclusion may be reached as part of the normal and routine reading in the day-to-day lectionary of a major centre of worship with a staff of readers. But in the mind of the community the word is very deeply associated with a complete, end-to-end reading of the Holy Book without interruption which is called *akhand path*. This usually takes two twenty-four hour days of non-stop reading by a relay of readers. This type of *path* and hence the *bhog* which comes at its end, can be performed in conjunction with weddings, obsequies, anniversaries and other occasions when a family or a worshipping community may consider such a reading appropriate.

Similarly, a *bhog* takes place at the end of the slower reading (*sahaj path*) when, for instance, a family decides to read the entire book as continuously as circumstances permit. For such a reading no time-limit applies. Of course, the *bhog* comes at its end, and it must be recited entire in a single service, without a break.

Another variation on *path* is the *saptahik path* in which case the reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is completed within one week (*saptah*). The recital of the text is taken in parts and completed within the seven-day span. The *sahaj* or slow-reading *path* may continue for a longer time, even for months.

The verb form *bhog pauna* simply means to end or conclude. In Punjabi idiom it may mean to end or conclude an argument or discussion. *Bhog* especially stands for funeral service. In a derivative use of the term, sacramental *karahprasad* distributed at the end of any congregational service is also sometimes called *bhog*. Any occasion

whether of joy or sorrow, wish fulfilment, or trial would usually prompt a Sikh householder to have a *path* of the holy book said, preferably by himself and/or jointly by members of the family. If however this is not possible, *pathis* or Scripture-readers will be invited or hired for the purpose. Date and time of *bhog* are notified in advance by word of mouth, through an announcement in *sangat* during routine service in the local *gurdwara* (almost every Sikh hamlet has a gurdwara), or through written letters to friends and relations. Coming into vogue is the custom of placing notices in newspaper. In the case of *sadharan* and *saptahik paths*, the reader would have already completed the reading of the Holy Book except for the last five pages. While the *sangat* is gathering at the appointed time, the officiant will be preparing *karaprasad* in a steel cauldron over burning logs, coal or in an electric oven. When ready, it is respectfully lifted and carried overhead to the site of the congregation and placed on the right side of where the Holy Book rests. If a choir is on hand, some scriptural hymns appropriate to the occasion will be sung. The *granthi* (officiant) will then read from the Holy Book what may be called the inaugural hymn. Thereafter he will turn over reverently the pages of the Holy Volume to arrive at the unread portion. He will start reading slowly and in a singing tone the *slokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur (couplets, 57 in number, popularly called *bhog de slokas*), *Mundavani* and a *sloka* by Guru Arjan. Then follows the last composition, *Ragamala*.

The *bhog* must in all cases include the reading of the end of the Holy Book. That is, the recitation of the last five pages, pages 1426 onwards. This begins with the reading of 57 *slokas* by Guru Tegh Bahadur and continues to the end of the Book. The music, cadences and imagery of these verses have a unique and exquisite beauty of their own.

After these *slokas*, *Mundavani* by Guru Arjan, is recited. This is a kind of seal to the Scripture. It reiterates the essentials of the teaching of the Book—*sat* (truth), *santokh* (contentment; rejoicing in one's lot), *vichar* (wisdom) and the remembrance of the Holy Name (*nam*). It is essentially a word to all humankind.

After the Granth reading has been completed, *ardas* is recited by the entire congregation. In it a special blessing is called for the purpose for which the *path* was held. *Ardas* has its own powerful associations which are now brought into *bhog*. These include the recalling to mind of past Sikh heroism, devotion and martyrdom and the marking present of the *khalsa* in all its venerable might.

After *ardas,* the Hukam or command for the day is obtained by reading out the hymn offered by the text which is naturally interpreted in the context of the intention of the *path,* that is, as the word of the Guru to those receiving it at that point with their purposes particularly in mind, be it a family event, a funeral, a wedding, or invocation for blessing on a new venture.

N. Q. K.

BOLE SO NIHAL, SATI SRI AKAL (**G. S. Talib**) is the Sikh slogan or *jaikara* (lit. shout of victory, triumph or exultation). It is divided in two parts or phrases. The first, *bole so nihal* or *jo bole so nihal*, is a statement meaning "whoever utters (the phrase following) shall be happy, shall be fulfilled," and the second part *sati sri akal* (Eternal is the Holy/Great Timeless Lord). This *jaikara*, first popularized by Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X, has become, besides being a popular mode of expressing ebullient religious fervour or a mood of joy and celebration, an integral part of Sikh liturgy and is shouted at the end of *ardas* or prayer, said in *sangat* or holy congregation. One of the Sikhs in the *sangat*, particularly the one leading *ardas*, shouts the first phrase, *jo bole so nihal*, in response to which the entire congregation, including in most cases the leading Sikh himself utter in unison *sati sri akal* in a long-drawn full-throated shout. The *jaikara* or slogan aptly expresses the Sikh belief that all victory (*jaya* or *jai*) belongs to God, Vahiguru, a belief that is also expressed in the Sikh salutation *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Vahiguru ji ki Fateh* (Khalsa is of God and to God belongs the victory, or Hail the Guru's Khalsa! Hail the Guru's victory!!) In their hour of triumph, therefore, the Sikh's remember *sati sri akal* instead of exulting in their own valour.

Traditionally, the slogan or war-cry expressing communal fervour and assent to or enthusiasm for a cause, *sat sri akal* has been so used through the three-hundred-year-old history of the Sikh people, since the creation of the Khalsa. In a normal situation when two Sikhs meet, they exchange greetings pronouncing Sat Sri Akal thus pointing out the glory of God to each other. Although as a salutation it is by now the established form of Sikh greeting, it does not have the sanction of history or orthodoxy. Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh, the other form of salutation, is generally used only by people

punctilious in the observance of proper form. Those addressing a Sikh religious congregation will, as a rule, greet the audience with the salutation, Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh. Sat Sri Akal shouted in unison responding to the call *jo bole so nihal* (whoever so pronounces shall prosper) is a call to action, or expression of ecstatic joy or an invocation for Divine aid or succour. While *sat* or *sati* (Sanskrit *satya*) means 'true', 'good', 'abiding', 'real' and 'eternal', sri is an honorific denoting beauty, glory, grace or majesty. *Sati* has the sanction of Guru Nanak's Mul Mantra in the *Japu* where after Ik Onkar, it appears as a constituent of Satinamu (Reality Eternal). *Akal* also occurs in Mul Mantra in the phrase Akal Murati (Form Eternal), descriptive of the Absolute.

Akal as the Divine name appealed particularly to Guru Gobind Singh, as his philosophical vision of the cosmos and the human life centred around this concept. *Akal* means 'Timeless' or 'Transcending Time.' Time being the consuming element, making for birth, decay and death, in Guru Gobind Singh's vision the most essential attribute lying at the core of human conception of the Divine is Its timeless quality. *Kal* is Sanskrit for time and in common parlance stands for death—more precisely, the inevitable hour of death. Fear being fear of death basically, in Guru Gobind Singh's metaphysical thinking and moral philosophy, to make the Timeless the centre of one's faith is the way to banish fear and to make heroes of ordinary mortals. Consequently, the inevitability of death and the futility of fear are among the principal themes of Guru Gobind Singh's teaching. In his compositions there are several verbal formations from *kal* (time) which express his vision. God is Sarab Kal (Lord of All-Time), Akal-Purakh (the Eternal Pervasive Reality) and has all the attributes arising from His quality of Timelessness. Guru Gobind Singh's principal composition of adoration is entitled *Akal*

Ustati (Laudation of the Timeless). In places, the Guru has identified God with Time or All-Time, that is eternity. The opening line of one of his hymns reads *keval kal i kartar* (the All-Time, i.e. the Eternal alone is the creator). This by implication repudiates the claim of Brahma, one aspect of the Hindu trinity or of other deities, to be the true creator.

Akal occurs at four places in the *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas. In each context it conveys the sense of God the Eternal, Timeless. By the time of Bhai Gurdas, whose active life spanned the periods of Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind, this term was familiar and well established in the Sikh tradition, and consequently when Guru Gobind Singh picked it out to make it the vehicle for expressing his deepest inspiration, he was only enriching a concept already a constituent of the philosophical milieu of the Sikh people.

As reported by the royal news-writer, when in 1699 the new initiation of *amrit* was introduced by Guru Gobind Singh, for days afterwards, the whole atmosphere around Anandpur, the venue of the baptismal ceremonies, was resounding with cries of Akal, Akal. This referred to the shouts of Sat Sri Akal incessantly raised by the converts to the Khalsa faith filled with new fervour. In subsequent times, after the Sikhs acquired political power in the Punjab, the seal of the Sikh chiefs would bear the inscription, *Akal Sahi* (Akal be our Succourer). The most militant section of the Sikh crusaders, the Nihangs were called Akalis (followers of Aka). During the early 1920's, when the Sikh people were fired with a new reformist and patriotic zeal, the party spearheading these programmes took to itself the name Akali, which is politically still a viable term.

The Sikh form of greeting or salutation has its individual significance and character. It is different from the Islamic salutation in which blessings of peace are sought for each other (*salam alaikum, wa'alaikum salam*). It is distinct also from Indian

greetings (*namaste or namaskar*) which aim at paying homage or respects to the person addressed. The Sikh greeting exchanged with folded hands on either side in mutual courtesy and respect is essentially an utterance of laudation to the Timeless and an expression of faith in human unity and dignity.

Over the years, the boundaries between the Sikh slogan and Sikh greeting have become interlocked. *Sat sri akal* which is part of the Sikh slogan is now the general form of Sikh greeting. This has usurped the place of the more formal and proper salutation which also carries the sanction of Sikh theological postulates, i.e. *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh*. The Sikh node of salutation has gone through a long-drawn process of evolution. The earliest form of Sikh salutation was *Pairi Pauna*. In one of the life-accounts of Guru Nanak known as *Adi Sakhian*, the injunction is said to have come down from the Almighty Himself. One day, it is recorded, the Formless (Nirankar) called Baba Nanak into His presence and said:

> Nanak, I am greatly pleased with you . . . Listen Nanak. I do, hereby, ordain a separate Order of yours. In the Kaliyug I shall be known as the True Lord and you as the Preceptor Lord. . . And, I bless you with a unique Order. The greeting of your order shall be *Pairi Pauna* (I bow at your feet), whereas the greeting of the Vaisnavas shall be *Ram Kishan*, of the Sannyasis, *Om Namo Narayanaya*, of the Yogis, Adesa, and of the Muhammdans, *Salam 'Alaikum*.
>
> But O Nanak, all those who come into your fold, shall greet one another with *Pairi Pauna*, the reply in each case being *Satguru Ko Pairi Pauna*.

This quotation is from a seventeenth century compilation. We have still an earlier testimony vouchsafing that in the early days of Sikhism, the Sikhs had, as their greeting.

Pairi Pauna and the practice of touching each other's feet. Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of the Fifth and Sixth Gurus, mentions the practice of *pairi pauna*, i.e. touching the feet, in very clear terms. He writes:

(In the Court of Guru Nanak)

The Ruler and the Pauper were equal.

He brought into vogue the practice of bowing at each other's feet.

What a wonderful feat the Beloved wrought!

Lo, the head bows at the feet.

******

Do not give up the practice of bowing at others' feet.

For in the Kaliyug this is the path.

******

A Sikh should adopt the practice of bowing at another's feet;

He should listen to the advice of the (other) Gursikh, and

ponder over what he says.

These examples can by multiplied and even supplemented with *sakhis* (stories) from the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* and even from the Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak by Miharban. Both these life-accounts contain numerous stories to show the prevalence of this form of greeting at an early stage of the evolution of the Sikh Panth.

In the *Bala Janam Sakhi* occurs a different form of greeting. Instead of *Pairi Pauna* of the *Puratan* cycle and of the *Miharban* tradition, we have here, Kartar Kartar (Creator! Creator!) meaning let us bow to the Lord, and *Sat Kartar* (Creator is True). This, we are told, was anterior to the former. Even Miharban himself writes:

> At that time whosoever of the Sikhs came, he did not greet others with the word, Pairi Pae Ji, nor would the addressee say, Satguru Ko Pairi Pauna. On the contrary, whosoever came, he would greet others saying, "Kartar, Kartar, O' Sikhs of the Guru, Kartar, Kartar." All the Sikhs who came to Guru Nanak, too greeted him saying, "Kartar, Kartar." The congregation was known as the Kartaris.

Supporting evidence may be found in Guru Nanak naming the town he raised on the bank of the River Ravi, Kartapur. Besides, we have the testimony of Zulfikar Ardistani, author of the famous Persian work *Dabistan-I-Mazahib*. He lived during the time of the Sixth Guru. He has left us a graphic account of Nanak-panthis or Sikhs of his time. He records in his book that the followers of Guru Nanak were known as *Kataris*. This obviously refers to their practice of repeating Kartar Kartar on meeting each other.

So Kartar Kartar is the first form of greeting which became prevalent in Sikhism. It was, however, soon replaced with *Pairi Pauna*. It is recorded in *Adi Sakhian* that when Bhai Lahina came from Guru Nanak back to Mate di Sarai, Takht Mall, a close associate of Bhai Lahina came to see him. Bhai Lahina, who had by now become Guru Angad, wanted to receive him with an embrace. But Takht Mall avoided this saying, "You are back from a place of great reverence. I stand to gain by bowing at your feet "and not hugging)." This probably was the beginning of the new form of greeting. And, the practice spread. It touched its zenith at Amritsar, the town founded by Guru Ram Das. The Guru had encouraged people from all castes, high and low, and from all classes, to come and settle in the new town. All of them greeted each other with *Pairi Pauna* and touched one another's feet. This practice continued for a long time; and even today it is

not unlikely that one would be greeted by an old citizen with the words *Pairi Pauna Ji, razi ho"* (I bow at your feet, Sir, how do you do?).

The next vital change occurred when the Tenth Guru created the Khalsa. Since Guru Gobind Singh wanted a complete transformation of Sikh society, he ordered the overhauling of two fundamental institutions of the Sikhs. The first was the substitution of *Khande di Pahul* for *Charan Pahul* and the second was the substitution of *Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Vahiguru Ji Ki Fateh* for *Pairi Pauna*. Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash,* describes the end of the custom of the *Charan Pahul* graphically in the following verse:

The Guru collected the washing of his feet in a jar,

Sealed its mouth with wax,

And consigned it to the River Sutlej

In its place he now ordained *Khande di Pahul*

Thus, the practice of administering *Charan Pahul* was discarded and along with it was discarded the former mode of greeting, *Pairi Pauna*. In its place the Panth was now given a new salutation, a new form of greeting, *Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Vahiguru Ji Ki Fateh* (Khalsa belongs to God, and to Him alone belongs the Victory).

The proper salutation for the Khalsa—Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Vahiguru Ji Ki Fateh—was made current among the Sikhs by command of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of manifestation of the Khalsa in 1699. *Vahiguru* (also spelt *Vahguru*) is expressive of wonder or ecstasy at Divine infinitude or glory. Vahiguru has become the most characteristic name for God in the Sikh creed, like Allah in Islam. It occurs in the Guru Granth Sahib "Saviayyas by Bhatt Gayand, p. 1402) repeated ecstatically as a *mantra*. In the compositions of Guru Arjan (GG, 376), it is used in the inverted form as Gur Vahu.

Bhai Gurdas in his *Varan* has used it as being synonymous with the absolute, the Creator in a number of places (I. 49, IV. 17, VI. 5, IX. 13, XI. 3 and 8, XII. 17, XII. 2, XXIV. 1, Xl. 22). This prolific use by one whose philosophical exposition of Sikh metaphysics and mysticism is the earliest on record indicates that by the time of Guru Arjan (the Savaiyyas referred to above were also composed by poets, Bhatts, attending on him) Vahiguru as the Sikh name for God was well established and had acquired the overtones which have since been associated with it as expression of the Sikh monotheistic affirmation of faith.

Because of this close and inalienable association, Guru Gobind Singh, at the time of introducing the new form on initiation with adjuration to the initiates to maintain a stern moral discipline and to cultivate qualities of crusaders and martyrs for the faith, administered the new faith in terms of the name of God which was held in the highest reverence in the tradition handed down to him. The new form of salutation, which annulled all the previous ones till then prevalent in Sikh society, was enunciation as Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Vahiguru Ji Ki Fateh—the Khalsa is the Lord's own: to the Lord is the Victory. This two-fold affirmation was, in the first place, expression of a special relationship between God and those who dedicated their entire life to His service. Second, it was the expression of that faith in the ultimate triumph of the forces of goodness which, despite all apparent setbacks, trials and travail, is the just and essential end of the fight between good and evil in the world. This faith has been asserted over and over again by Guru Nanak and his spiritual successors. After being administered *amrit* (water stirred with a two-edged dagger, sanctified by recitation of the Guru's word and thus transmuted into the elixir of immortality), each initiate was adjured to raise the

affirmation, Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa Vahiguru Ji Ki Fateh! This was duly repeated, and the tradition continues till this day. Apart from being used as the affirmation of faith, this formula is also the orthodox approved Sikh form of salutation.

Two terms in this formula need elucidation. Khalsa is an Arabic word, meaning, literally, 'pure' and used in the administration terminology of the Muslim State system in India for lands or fiefs directly held by the sovereign and not farmed out to landlords on conditions of military service and of making over to the State a share of the produce. In the term Khalsa, both these meanings are discerned. In one of Guru Hargobind's Hukamnanas and in one of Guru Tegh Bahadur's, Khalsa is used for the Guru's devotees, with the implication particularly as 'the Guru's Own!' As Guru Gobind Singh adopted the term and gave it centrality in the enunciation of the creed, the idea of purity perhaps came to acquire primacy. Khalsa occurs also in the Guru Granth Sahib (GG, 654), where it is used in the sense of 'pure', 'emancipated.' This term appealed to Guru Gobind Singh as being truly expressive of the vision of a noble, heroic race of men that he was creating.

Fateh, fath in Arabic, literally means opening or forcing the portal of a besieged fort, implying victory. It has been used in the Qur'an in the sense of victory, and one of the attributive names of God in the Muslim tradition is Fatih (lit. Opener, i.e. Vanquisher over all evil forces). While *jai, jaikar* have been used in the Sikh tradition for victory and are used thus even in the *Dasam Granth, jai* was dropped from the new Sikh tradition, though for shouts of victory the term *jaikara* has become firmly established. Fateh was adopted as the current popular term for triumph or victory and made part of the Sikh affirmation and salutation. Fateh as faith occurs once in the Guru Granth Sahib (GG,

258). "*Phahe kate mite gavan fatih bhai mani jit*—the noose of Yama hath been cleft, transmigration hath ceased and, with the conquest of the self, true victory hath been achieved." The implied meaning here is of a moral victory. Jit, a word from Indian tradition, like *jaikara* had got established also in Sikh tradition, and in the invocation Panth ki Jit (Victory to the Panth) is repeated in the Sikh congregational prayer daily. Fateh nonetheless remains the prime Sikh term for victory, and has been repeated again and again in Sikh history, down from the Persian couplet put on Sikh coins (*Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-e-nusrat bedarang, yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh*) to the common daily parlance of the Sikh people, wherein every success is designated as *fateh*.

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G. S. T

BRAHMGIANI (**D. K. Gupta**)(Skt. *Brahmajnanin*), lit. the knower of Brahman or one possessing the knowledge of Brahman. The knowledge (*giana, jnana*) of the Universal Spirit (Brahman) consists not in the mere recognition of His existence, but in a continuous consciousness about Him—His realization in the heart or rather the realization of a total identity of the individual soul (*atman*) with that Universal Soul (Brahman), which makes the former transcend joy and sorrow and life and death. This total identity signifies, in essence, the oneness of the Universe with that Universal Soul and of the latter with the individual souls which a Brahmgiani realizes as the Ultimate Reality. The concept of Brahman in Sikhism delineates the Universal Spirit in theistic terms as the Absolute, the Creator and the Ordainer of the Universe which is, as it were, His visible form. The concept of Brahmgiani in Sikhism is elaborated in sublime poetry of Guru Arjan, Nanak V, in his *Sukhmani* (GG, 272-74). According to him Brahmgiani is one who has realized, in his life, the One Supreme Spirit as well as his identity with the individual selves. Such a person has also been called *gurmukh, sadhu* or *sant*. The Brahmgiani enjoys the highest spiritual status and he is accorded the highest veneration. The Brahmgiani in Sukhmani is postulated as being unattached (*nirlep*) like the lotus in water. He is endowed with Divine realization; he is deeply humane and compassionate. To all is he gracious casting an equal glance on all like the sun, and indifferent to praise or dispraise like the earth. He has humility and is ever anxious to do good to others. In a moment of exaltation, Guru Arjan pronounces him the Supreme Being Himself—such is his merit, such his holiness: "N*anak brahmgiani api parmesur"* (GG, 273). He is compared to the earth to whom he who is digging it with the shovel and he who is plastering it with sandalwood are alike. Brahmgiani is gracious, compassionate to all.

From all bonds is he free. On God is solely his reliance and on Him are all his hopes centred. Ever is he awake in spirit. To all does he bring liberation by his counsel.

Brahmgiani is the creator of all, immortal, dying never.

Brahmgiani is the conferrer of the way of liberation, the perfect being,

rewarder of deeds.

Brahmgiani is the succourer of the helpless;

Brahmgiani affords protection to all.

All creation is Brahmgiani's image;

Brahmgiani himself is the Supreme Being.

Brahmgiani alone is deserving of his high repute;

Of all is Brahmgiani the overlord, sayeth Nanak.

(GG, 273-74)

Brahmgiani looks on all beings equally and impartially—*brahmgiani sada samdarsi* (GG, 272). He showers the nectar of love and affection of all (GG, 373). An embodiment of compassion, he does good to others and helps those in distress. A model of piety and righteousness, he is the repository of all ethical virtues and a shunner of all vices and sins (GG, 272, 273). He is unaffected by the pleasures and enjoyments of the world just as the lotus-leaf remains untouched by water. He is fully in control of his mind and is pure and blemishless (GG. 272-73). He takes pleasure and pain, profit and loss alike. A Brahmgiani leads others to the path of holiness and piety. He commands their spontaneous respect and reverence by virtue of his great glory and profound spiritual influence over them (GG, 273). He is a serene and sublime soul and an ideal human entity of ineffable greatness, who, in his supreme spiritual attainment, eminently

commands the vision of the Universal Soul in himself and who has even been exalted by Guru Arjan to the position of the Supreme Being, in the eighth *astpadi* or canto of *Sukhmani: "Brahmgiani puran purakhu bidhata. . . Brahmgiani api nirankaru* (GG, 273-74).

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D. K. G

BUDDHI (**J. S. Neki**) or *buddhi* (from Sanskrit *budh*—to wake up, be awake, to perceive, learn) is the intellectual aspect of mind (*antahkarana*) whose other aspects *man* and *humai* are intertwined with it in close interrelationship. Its nearest English equivalent may be intellect.

Man (Sanskrit *manas*) as the receptacle of sense-impressions from sense-organs, organizes them into precepts, yet it has doubt of indetermination about them. *Buddhi* defines and ascertains them and brings about definite and determinate cognition. *Man* simply assimilates sense-impressions; *haumai* (or *ahankara*) self-appropriates the apperceived impressions, while *buddhi* determines their nature, categorizes them and welds them into concepts. Its function, then, is to bring about certainty and definitiveness in knowledge. Definitive apprehension might spur action. Thus it is *buddhi* which resolves to act and then guides the ensuing action.

A fundamental categorization of precepts as also of ensuing actions concerns their moral import. The deftness with which *buddhi* does that is variable. If it can exercise acute ethical discrimination, it is known as *bibek buddhi* (discriminative intellect). That can happen only if it has become God-centred. On the contrary, if it remains self-centred (*aham buddhi*), then it remains morally confounded and unable to discriminate.

Bibek buddhi in *gurbani*, Guru's utterance, has also been called *sar-buddhi* (the essential intellect), *tat buddhi* (the real intellect), *bimal or nirmal buddhi* (unclouded, clear intellect), *bal* buddhi (powerful intellect), mati *buddhi* (the counselling intellect) and *sudh buddhi* (pure intellect).

Aham buddhi has also been called *chapal buddhi* (the unstable intellect), *buddhi bikar* (foul intellect), *malin buddhi* (turbid intellect), *nibal buddhi* (weak intellect), *durmat buddhi* (perverse intellect), and *phanin buddhi* (the deluding intellect).

This moral bipolarity of the functioning of intellect stands out in relief in *gurbani*. In its decadent form, *buddhi* wastes itself in vain, egoistic pursuits: *kaunu karam mera kari kari marai*—for what reason does it die proclaiming mine! Mine!? (GG, 1159). However, when through evolution it ascends up the ethical scale (*buddhi-pragas*), it flowers into *bibek buddhi* which is a divine attribute: *tu samrathu tu sarab mai tu hai buddhi bibek jiu*—You are omnipotent, you are all-pervasive, you are the discriminating intellect (GG, 761). However, if it begins to undergo the process of devolution (*visarjan*) down the moral scale, *buddhi* becomes delusional intellect (*phanin buddhi*).

Buddhi, also called *akal* (Arabic ‘aql) in *gurbani* is considered to be an instrument for serving the Divine purpose and acquiring merit: *akali sahibu seviai akali paiai manu*—by wisdom is the Lord served; by intellect is honour attained (GG, 1245). By contrast, *buddhi* in its decadent form is not only infirm but also arrogant, which makes it despicable:

> Some are devoid of intellect, or sense, or comprehension
>
> And understand not a syllable.
>
> Such folk, saith Nanak, as fill themselves with pride.
>
> Without merit are asses pedigreed.
>
> (GG, 1246)

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J. S. N.

DAN (**Taran Singh**) (Skt. *Dana* from the root da 'to give') means the act of giving or that which is given either as charity or alms or as offering, fee or reward for spiritual instruction received or for religious rite or ritual performed. The latter, however, is more appropriately called *daksina*. *Dan* (charity or alms-giving), according to the Brahmanical code as well as the code of Manu, is a means or earning spiritual merit, and is thus a religious obligation and may not necessarily be the result of a feeling of compassion or pity, though the humanitarian motive cannot be completely excluded from the concept of *dan*. The mode of *dan* and the selection of person worthy of receiving it may, however, differ. For example, a Brahman, according to Hindu tradition, retains preferential status as a fit recipient of *dan*. Next come wandering ascetics, and then ordinary beggars seeking alms. Orphans, widows and destitutes are also considered to be deserving of sympathy and help. According to Hindu texts, Ksatriyas and Vaisyas are expressly forbidden to receive *dan*, while "all mendicants subsist through subsistence afforded by householders," and "for the Brahmacharis (celibate students) not to beg alms is a sin" for it is their special duty to beg alms for their teacher." On the other hand, most unworthy recipients of *dan* are the criminals, drunkards, gamblers and evil-doers. There are unworthy donors too, such as prostitutes, gamblers and bandits.

Buddhism and Jainism laid great stress on compassion and liberality, but they rejected the claims of Brahmans as special recipients of alms. The *Jataka* literature celebrates the virtue of giving; the Boddhisattva gives away everything—his wealth, clothes, food, his own body and even the religious merit he may have accumulated. But both Buddhist and Jain monks themselves depend for their subsistence on the alms and donations from the laity. The householders are therefore enjoined to give alms to the

monks and to donate liberally for the upkeep of monasteries and other charitable institutions.

The word *dan* as well as the concept has been assimilated into the Sikh tradition. Though there exist no codified injunctions about it, the practice of *dan* is a significant feature of the Sikh way of life. The emphasis here is more on giving than on receiving. No fixed group or class of people is specified as favoured recipients of *dan*. Nor is any particular commodity out of material belongings considered especially sanctified for purposes of *dan*. However, whatever is given away in *dan* must have been earned by one's honest labour. Says Guru Nanak: "He, O Nanak, who lives by his honest labour and yet gives away something out of his hands, has alone found the (true) way" (GG, 1245). There are numerous other verses in the Guru Granth Sahib extolling the virtue of *dan*. Also from Guru Nanak, "He alone realizes the truth who is truly instructed, who is compassionate towards all living beings and who dispenses *dan*" (GG. 468). A *Gurmukh* or true devotee is advised to practise "*nam* (remembrance of the Divine Name), *dan* and *isnan* (holy bathing)" (GG, 942). Guru Arjan Nanak V: "Meditate on the Lord's Name, listen to the Lord's Name being recited and to all render *dan*" (GG, 135). For himself Guru Nanak seeks the *dan* "of the dust from underneath the feet of the holy ones which, if obtained, to my forehead would I apply" (GG, 468). In the words of Guru Arjan: "the most desirable boon to beg for is to beg of the Guru love of singing the Lord's laudation" (GG, 1018). In his daily *ardas* or supplicatory prayer, the highest form of *dan (danan sir dan)* a Sikh seeks is the *nam-dan*, gift of God's name.

Sikhism does not countenance renunciation of material goods, nor does it deprecate worldly callings. The popular aphorism *kirt karni, nam japna, vand chhakna*

(to earn one's living by the labour of one's hands, to repeat the Name of God and to eat only after sharing with the others one's victuals) forms an essential part of its ethical code. Whereas *dan* of material goods is commended, one overriding implication is that what is given away has been acquired through honourable means. Another requisite is that *dan* must be given with a willing heart. It should be the result of a spontaneous urge for an humanitarian act. As Guru Angad, Nanak II, says, "Giving under compulsion earns no merit nor does it benefit anyone; excellent is the deed, O Nanak, which is performed with pleasure" (GG, 787). Another shade especially stressed in the Sikh tradition is that *dan* be proffered in all humility and in an utterly selfless spirit. It should not create a sense of pride or ego in the mind of one who gives. Ego *(haumai)* vitiates the act of charity. Says Guru Tegh Bahadur: "If one performing pilgrimages, observing fasts and giving *dan* nourishes in his mind a sense of pride, all such acts remain fruitless like the bathing of an elephant (who casts dust over his body after the bath)" (GG, 1428). To dispense *dan*, one need not necessarily be affluent. A simple meal served by an humble labourer to a casual guest is more meritorious than a sumptuous feast given by a rich man to professional mendicants.

In the Sikh tradition, all *dan* or offering is in the name of the Guru and, usually, through *golak* (treasure, or receptacle kept in a *gurdwara* for the devotees' offerings) of the Guru or the Panth representing the Guru. The channels for *dan* to flow into the Guru's treasury are by now well established. First, the dictum *gharib ki rasna, Guru ki golak* (a destitute' tongue, i.e. mouth, is the Guru's till) sets the general principle that the primary object of charity is to feed the needy. This is done through the systematized and organized institution known as Guru Ka Langar. The second institutionalized channel for

dan is dasvandh (lit. tithes) or one-tenth of his earning a Sikh is required to set apart for the welfare of the community. Contributions may be made at any recognized centre—the local *gurdwara*, any historical shrine, an orphanage, school, charitable hospital, and the like.

In the *ardas* or Sikh's daily prayer are listed the categories of *dan* a Sikh supplicates for. The primary one is the *dan* or gift of the Holy Name. He prays, besides, for the *dan* of the ideal Sikh way of life, the *dan* of true Sikh conduct and discipline, the *dan* of unfaltering faith in Sikh principles, the *dan* of unflinching trust in the Guru, the *dan* of company of pious Sikhs, the *dan* of pilgrimage to the Harimandar at Amritsar and other sacred places, and the *dan* of holy bath at Amritsar. The gifts that a Sikh supplicates for are for the whole community and not for himself alone. This sharing of blessing is part of the Sikh way of life.

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T. S.

DASAMDVAR (**L. M. Joshi**) (Skt. *Dasamadvara*), lit, meaning 'tenth gate', is a concept in Sikhism which signifies the door to enlightenment and spiritual vision. *Dasamdvar* in the Hathayogic system is also known as *brahmrandhra, moksadvara, mahapatha* and *madhya marga*, the terms frequently used in the esoteric literature of medieval India. It is a term of religious physiology and its significance lies in its being a concept in the framework of soteriological ideology. Nine apertures (*navdvaras*) opening towards outside the body serve the physical mechanism of human personality but when their energy, normally being wasted, is consciously channelized towards the self, the tenth gate or the *dasamdvar* opens inside the body and renders a hyper-physical service by taking the seeker beyond the bondage of embodied existence.

The human body is endowed with nine doors also called holes or streams. These nine are: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, anus, and urethra. All these are vital organs of living organism called human being. The Pali *Suttanipata* (verse 199. In *Khuddak nikaya*, vol. 1, p. 297) is perhaps one of the very first Indian texts which mentions the idea of nine 'holes' in the body. It is from a philosophically ascetic or Sramanic standpoint that the human body is described in this text as a mass of bones, sinews, flesh, etc. and as a bag for belly, intestines, liver, heart, bladder, lungs, kidneys, blood, bile, etc. "Ever from its nine streams (*navahi sotehi*) the unclean flows." The *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (III. 18) and the *Bhagavadgita* (V. 13) refer to human body as "a city with nine gates" (*nava dvara pure dehi*) in which the Self dwells, neither acting nor causing to act. The *Katha Upanisad* (2.51), however, describes human abode of the Unborn One as "a city with eleven gates" (*puram-ekadasa-dvaram)*. Mystical and soteriological significance of *dasamdvar* is found in the writings of the *siddhas* and the

sants. As a matter of fact the history of the idea of *dasamdvar* begins with the Buddhist Siddhas and we owe its popularity to Natha yogis. The term as well as the concept first appears in the works of Siddhas who flourished during the period between eighth and eleventh centuries. The Siddhas transmitted the theory of *dasamdvar* as a mystical spiritual gateway to Vaisnava Sants and thence it came to the Sikh Gurus. The process of transmission was direct and natural since the Sants (or *Bhagats*) and Gurus lived and taught in a society thoroughly acquainted with and influenced by the terms, concepts and precepts of the Siddhas. Although the concept of *dasamdvar* remained the same, its functional value in theistic theology and socio-devotional methodology of the Sikh Gurus became decidedly different from its original one in the non-theistic ideology and esoteric-ascetic methodology of Buddhist Siddhas and Natha yogis.

In the Buddhist *caryapadas* or hymns of spiritual practice, the *dasamadvara* is also called *vairocana-dvara*, the brilliant gate or the supreme gate. In the texts of the Natha school such as the *Siddhasiddhanda paddhati* (II. 6), the mouth of *sankhini* is called the tenth gate (*sankhini-bibaram-dasam dvaram)*. *Sankhini* is the name of a curved duct *(banka nala*) through which nectar (*soma rasa, maharasa* or *amrit*) passes downwards. This curved duct lies between the moon (*candra*) below the *sahasrara-cakra* or thousand-petalled lotus plexus in the cebrum region and the hollow in the palatal region. The *Goraksavijaya* describes *sankhini* as a double-mouthed (*dvi-mukhia*) serpent (*sarpini*), one mouth above, the other below. The life elixir called *amrit* or nectar pours down through the mouth of *sankhini*. This mouth called *dasamdvar* has to be shut up and the quintessence of life, *amrit* or *maharasa* has to be conserved by the yogi. The *amrit* which pours down from the *dasamdvar* falls down in the fire of the sun (*surya)* where it

is dried up by time (*kalagni*). The yogi by closing the *dasamdvar* and preserving the *amrit* deceives Time (death) and by drinking it himself through cumbersome *khecari-mudra* he attains immortality. Some other *hathayogic* texts name *susumna nari* instead of *sankhini*. However, all the texts agree that the *brahmrandhra* or the *dasamdvar* is the cavity on the roof of the palate and *khecari mudra* has to be performed for tasting the elixir of the *amrit* pouring down from it.

The notion of *dasamdvar*, written as *dasamduar*, occurs several times in the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhism is a strictly monotheistic system belief and it must be stated at the outset that according to Sikh view of the *dasamdvar*, the tenth door opens into the abode of God, the Creator—*dasam duara agam apara param purakh ki ghati* (GG, 974), and again—*nau ghar thape thapanharai dasvai vasa alakh aparai* (GG, 1036). This fact distinguishes Sikhism from the non-theistic non-dualistic philosophy of the Siddhas. Second outstanding difference is that Sikhism is predominantly a devotional pathway, relying chiefly on the discipline of *bhakti*, i.e. loving devotion for the divine; the Siddhas and Nathas, on the other hand, practised Tantra or Hathayoga in which the disciplines of psychology and physiology were fused together. With these differences the notion of *dasamduar* in Sikhism employs the same terms and symbols as used by Siddhas and Nathas.

The nine doors (*nau daryaje*) and the tenth door are often mentioned together to show their differences. The unstruck sound is heard at the tenth door when it is freed from the shackles of nine doors in the body—*nau darvaje dasvai mukta anahad sabadu vajavania* (GG, 110). It is believed that the tenth door is closed by a hard diamond-like door (*bajar kapat*) which is *haumai* (self-centredness). This hard and strong door is

opened and the darkness of *haumai* is dispelled by the instruction of the Teacher (Guru). In other words, the tenth door is the door of enlightenment and it opens only when the door consisting of *haumai* is broken. It is taken for granted in Sikhism that the tenth door is the supreme state of the mind. It is certainly not a physical door; it is that state of purified consciousness in which God is visible and all contacts with physical existence are cut off. It is called a being's own house (*nij-ghar*), that is to say, a being's real nature which is like light (*joti sarup*). One hears day and night the *anahad sabda* there when one dwells in one's own house through the tenth door—*nau dar thake dhavatu rahae, dasvai nijghari vasa pae* (GG, 124).

At few places in the Gurbani, the term *dasamduar* has been used to denote ten organs—five sensory organs and five organs of action, i.e. *jnanendriyas* and *karmendriyas*. Says Guru Nanak: "*Hukami sanjogi gari das duar, panch vasahi mili joti apar*"—in the fortress of the body created in his *hukam* are ten doors. In this fort five subtle elements of *sabda* (sound), *sparsa* (touch), *rupa* (sight), *rasa* (taste) and *grandha* (smell) abide having the infinite light of the Lord in them (GG, 152). The *amrit* which flows at the tenth door is the essence of Divine name (*nam ras)* according to the Guru; it is not the physical elixir of immortality conceived by the Siddhas, nor is this *amrit* to be found by awakening *kundalini* or by practising *khecari mudra*; it is to be found through the Teacher's instruction. When the Satguru is encountered then one stops from running (after the nine doors) and obtains the tenth door. Here at this door the immortalizing food (*amrit bhojan)*, the innate sound (*sahaj dhuni*) is produced—*dhavatu thammia satiguri miliai dasva duaru paia; tithai amrit bhojanu sahaj dhuni upajai jitu sabadi jagatu thammi rahaia (*GG, 441).

This wholesome spot is not outside the physical frame. The second Guru also refers to the fort *(kotu)* with nine doors; the tenth door is hidden *(gupatu)*; it is closed by a hard door which can be opened by the key of the Guru's word (GG, 954). According to Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, he alone is released who conquers his mind and who keeps it free from defilement; arriving at the tenth door, and staying there he understands all the three spheres (GG, 490).

The importance of *dasamdvar* is of considerable theological interest. Here at the tenth door the *anahad sabda* (unstruck sound) is heard; here the divine drink of immortality trickles down; and here the devotee meets with the invisible and inaccessible transcendental Brahman who is described by the sages as unutterable (GG, 1002).

The devotional theology of Sikhism requires that the gateway of ultimate release can open only by God's will. The tenth door is closed with the adamantine hard door *(bajar kapat)* which can be opened duly with the Guru's word. Inside the front (i.e. the body) is the tenth door, the house in the cavity (*gupha ghar*); in this fort nine doors have been fixed according to Divine ordinance (*hukam*); in the tenth door the Invisible, Unwritten, Unlimited Person shows Himself—*bhitari kot gupha ghar jai nau ghar thape hukami rajai; dasvai purakhu alekhu apari ape alakhu lakhaida* (GG, 1033). This is the view expressed by the founder of Sikhism and he repeats it at another place also. He says that the Establisher has established nine houses (*nau ghar*) or nine doors in the city of this body; the Invisible and Infinite dwells at the tenth house or tenth door (GG, 1036). The nectar-like essence *(amrit ras)* is dripped by the Satguru; it comes out appearing at the tenth door. The sounding of the unstruck sound announces, as it were, the manifestation of God at this door—*Amrit rasu satiguru chuaia; dasavai duari pragatu hoi aia; taha*

anahad sabad vajahi dhuni bani sahaje sahaji samai he (GG, 1069) The Siddhas, unlike the Sikh Gurus, find the *amrit* by their own effort.

Occasionally the term *das duar* is used in *gurbani* in the sense of sensory and motor organs of body which should be kept under control. For the most part, however, the Sikh Scripture stresses the need for realization of the *dasam duar*, apart from God's ordinance (*hukam*) and Teacher's compassion (*kirpa, prasad)* and the necessity of transcending the realm of three-strand nature (*triguna maya*). Kabir, for instance, says that the tenth door opens only when the trinity *(trikuti)* of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* is left behind—*trikuti chhutai dasva daru khulhai ta manu khiva bhai* (GG, 1123).

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L. M. J.

DASVANDH (**Wazir Singh**) or Dasaundh, lit, a tenth part, refers to the practice among Sikhs of contributing in the name of the Guru one-tenth of their earnings towards the common resources of the community. This is their religious obligation—a form of *seva* or humble service so highly valued in the Sikh system. The concept of *dasvandh* was implicit in Guru Nanak's own line: "*ghali khai kichhu hathhu dei, Nanak rahu pachhanahi sei*—He alone, O Nanak, knoweth the way who eats out of what he earneth by his honest labour and yet shareth part of it with others" (GG, 1245). The idea of sharing and giving was nourished by the institutions of *sangat* (holy assembly) and *langar* (community kitchen) the Guru had established. In the time of Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, a formal structure for channelizing Sikh religious giving was evolved. He set up 22 *manjis* or districts in different parts of the country, each placed under the charge of a pious Sikh who, besides preaching Guru Nanak's word, looked after the *sangats* within his/her jurisdiction and transmitted the disciple's offerings to the Guru. As the digging of the sacred pool, *amrit-sar*, and the erection in the middle of it of the shrine, Harimander, began under Guru Ram Das entailing large amounts of expenditure, Sikhs were enjoined to set apart a minimum of ten per cent (*dasvandh*) of their income for the common pool, Guru Ki Golak (q.v.). *Masands,* i.e. ministers and the tithe-collectors, were appointed to collect *kar bhet* (offerings) and *dasvandh* from Sikhs in the area they were assigned to, and pass these on to the Guru.

Dasvandh has since become part of the Sikh way of life. The custom bears parallels to Christian tithes requiring members of the church to pay a tenth part of the annual produce of their land or its equivalent in money to support it and the clergy, and to Muslim *zakat* requiring assignment of 2.5 per cent of one's annual wealth for the welfare

of the destitute and the needy. Classical Indian society had no set procedure for regulating donations or charities, though references are traceable such as those in Parasar Rishi's writings urging the householder to reserve 1/21 part of his income for Brahmans and 1/31 part for the gods. The Upanisads and the *Bhagavadgita* commend "true alms" given with a sense of duty in a fit place and at a fit time to a deserving person from whom one expects nothing in return. *Dasvandh* is, however, to be distinguished from *dan* or charity. It essentially attends to the needs of the community and contributions are made specifically for the maintenance of its religious institutions such as *gurdwaras* and *guru ka langar* and projects of social welfare and uplift.

The custom of *dasvandh* was codified in documents called *rahitnamas,* manuals of Sikh conduct, written during the lifetime of Guru Gobind Singh or soon after. For example, Bhai Nand Lal's *Tankhahnama* records: "Hear ye, Nand Lal, says Gobind Singh, one who does not give *dasvandh* and, telling lies, misappropriates it, is not at all to be trusted." The tradition has been kept alive by chosen Sikhs who to this day scrupulously fulfil the injunction. The institution itself serves as a means for the individual to practice personal piety as well as to participate in the ongoing history of the community, the Guru Panth.

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W. S

DAYA (**J. S. Neki**) (usually spelt daia in Punjabi), from Skt. *Day* meaning to sympathize with, to have pity on, stands for compassion, sympathy. It means 'suffering in the suffering of all beings.' It is deeper and more positive in sentiment than sympathy. *Daya*, cognitively, observes alien pain; affectively, it gets touched by it and moves with affectional responses for the sufferer; and conatively it moves one to act mercifully, pityingly, with kindness and forgiveness. *Daya* is antithetical to *hinsa* (violence). One imbued with *daya* "chooses to die himself rather than cause others to die," says Guru Nanak (GG, 356).

Daya is a divine quality and a moral virtue highly prized in all religious traditions. In the Sikh Scripture, *mahadaial* (super compassionate), *daiapati* (lord of compassion), *daial dev* (merciful god), *karima, rahima* (the merciful one), etc., have been used as attributive names of God (GG, 249, 991, 1027, 727). In Sikh ethics, too, *daya* is *inter alia*, a basic moral requirement, a moral vow. "Keep your heart content and cherish compassion for all beings; this way alone can your holy vow be fulfilled" (GG 299).

At the human level, one can comprehend feeling of another's anguish, but as a theological doctrine it is to risk allowing suffering in God's life. This has often caused much controversy in theological circles. God does not suffer in the sense of pain from evil as evil, but may suffer compassion (*daya*) as bearing the pain of others to relieve them (of pain as also of evil). That is why at the time of Babar's invasion of India, Guru Nanak, when he witnessed the suffering of people, complained to God:

Eti mar pai kurlane tain ki dardu na aia

So much agony were they put through

So much anguish did they suffer—

Were you not, O God, moved to compassion? (GG, 360)

The Guru, in the image of God, is also *daial purakh* (compassionate being) and *bakhasand* (forgiver)—GG, 681.

Daya is a virtue of the mind. In Indian thought, virtues are classified into (i) those of the body: *dana* (charity), *paritrana* (succouring those in distress), *paricharana (*social service); (ii) those of speech: *satya* (veracity), *hitovachana* (beneficial speech), *priyavachana* (sweet speech), *svadhyaya* (reciting of Scriptures) and (iii) those of the mind which, besides *daya, also include* aparigraha *(unworldliness)* and *sraddha* (reverence and piety).

In Sikh thought *daya* is considered the highest virtue:

Athsathi tirath sagal punn jia daia parvanu

The merit of pilgrimages of holy places sixty-eight, and that of other virtues besides, equal not compassion to living beings. (GG, 136)

Daya, in fact, is considered to be Truth in action:

sachu ta paru janiai ja sikh sachi lei;

daia janai jia ki kichhu punnu danu karei

Truth dawns when truthful counsel is accepted,

Seeking familiarity with compassion one gives away virtuous charity. (GG, 468).

Daya is, in reality, true action or action par excellence (*karni sar*) as are truth and contentment, the other two high virtues (GG, 51).

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J. S. N.

DEATH (**J. S. Neki**), The primordial mystery and one of the cardinal conditions of existence. Scientifically, death is defined as "the permanent cessation of the vital function in the bodies of animals and plants" or, simply, as the end of life caused by senescence or by stoppage of the means of sustenance to body cells. In Sikhism the universal fact of mortality is juxtaposed to immortality (*amarapad*) as the ultimate objective *(paramartha)* of life. As a biological reality death is the inevitable destiny of everyone. Even the divines and prophets have no immunity from it. Mortality reigns over the realms of the gods as well.

Death will inevitably strike
Even in the land of Lord Indra*
Nor is Brahma's* domain free from it.
Likewise is Lord Siva's* world decreed to come to naught.
*three gods of the Hindu pantheon

(GG. 237

We all entered this world "with death as our written fate" (GG, 876), says Guru Nanak.

Death cannot be apprehended apart from life. Contemplating both together, one truly comprehends the phenomenon of life and death (*maran jivan ki sojhi pae)*.

A significant term used for death is *kal* which has a dual meaning. It connotes death as well as time. Both connotations intertwine theologically. Kal is often denoted as *jam kal* (jama=yamma, the Vedic God of Death). Day in and day out it gnaws at the fabric of life. But man remains ignorant and perceives it not.

That *kal* is constantly nibbling at life brings home to one the ephemerality of existence and therefore the necessity of making the most of it. If life has been lived in accord with acceptable laws it will win approval.

Death is the privilege of men
Who live life positively.

(GG, 579)

Death is legitimated by the ends it serves—surmounting the throes of transmigration or sacrifice for an ideal or laying down of one's life in a righteous cause. Such a death carries one beyond the realm of Time into the realm of Eternity (*akal)*. Eternity does not signify extended Time, but the state beyond Time, and therefore beyond mortality. Participation in Eternity does not lie hereafter. It is the state of immortality (*amarapad*) here in life which is liberation (*mukti*) from the throes of Time. That signifies the death of Death itself (*kal kale*).

To attain this state of immortality one need not necessarily pass through the portals of biological death. This state can be attained while one is still alive. To achieve this, however, one has to *die to oneself*.

This state is attainable by contemplating the Self by the grace of the Divine:

As by the Lord's favour one contemplates the self,
So one learns to die while still living.

(GG. 935)

Dying to oneself has several kindred nuances in Sikh theology. Spoken, not only in terms of decimation of man and even of egoity (*haumai*), this is also the connotation of dying in *sabda* (the Holy Word):

He who ceases in sabda

His death is blessed.

(GG, 1067)

Another type of "blessed" dying is through sacrifice. When he initiated the order of the Khalsa in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh invited Sikhs to offer him their own heads. Five volunteered in response to the call. The baptismal initiation ceremony fashioned after that event even now encapsulates its symbolic sacrifice. The initiate is required to die to his past *samskaras* and be born into the Guru's family.

The kindred spirits who

Served their Lord while they lived

Kept Him in mind while departing,

(GG, 1000)

yearn for their departure to their 'real home' (*nij ghar*) where they have a tryst with their Divine Spouse. At that time they invoke the blessings of one and all:

Predestined is the hour of my nuptials*

Come ye, my friends, and anoint the doorsteps.

* mystical term for death

Men are thus advised to meditate on Him who sends the call:

May the day of union for each arrive

(GG, 12)

Death, then marks the day of union with the Divine. It is not an occasion for grief. Lamentation over death is forbidden the Sikhs. In his Ramkali *Sadd*, the Call, the poet in the Guru Granth Sahib records;

By his wish the holy Guru (Guru Amar Das) his entire family to himself called, and said:

No one after me should cry,

Such that cry shall no way please me.

The Sikh bereavement ceremony consists of having the Holy Book, the Guru Granth Sahib, recited from end to end, praying for the departed soul and distributing the sacramental (*karahprasad*).

See BHOG.

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J. S. N.

DHUNI (**Major Gurmukh Singh**), from Skt. *Dhvani* meaning sound, echo, noise, voice, tone, tune, thunder, stands in Punjabi generally for sound and tune. In the Guru Granth Sahib, the term appears in the sense of tune at the head of 9 of the 22 *vars* (odes) under different ragas or musical measures. Directions with regard to the tunes in which those *vars* were meant to be sung were recorded by Guru Arjan when compiling the Holy Book. The classical system of Indian music had well-established tunes and corresponding prosodic forms; but the *var*, being basically a folk form, did not have any prescribed order. The Guru laid down tunes at least for odes for which models existed. The *vars*, with corresponding *dhunis*, are;

1. Var Majh by Nanak I—Malak Murid tatha Chandrahara Sohia ki dhuni (GG, 137).
2. Gauri Ki Var by Nanak V—Rai Kamaldi Mojdi ki Var ki dhuni (GG, 318)
3. Asa ki Var by Nanak I—Tunde Asrajai ki dhuni (GG, 462).
4. Gujari ki Var by Nanak III—Sikandar Birahim ki Var ki dhuni (GG, 508).
5. Vadahans ki Var by Nanak IV—Lalan Bahalima ki dhuni (GG, 585).

6. Ramkali ki Var by Nanak III—Jodhai Virai Purabani ki dhuni (GG, 947).
7. Sarang ki Var by Nanak IV—Rai Mahme Hasane ki dhuni (GG, 1237).
8. Var Malar Ki by Nanak I—Rane Kailas tatha Mal de ki dhuni (GG, 1278).
9. Kanare ki Var by Nanak IV—Muse ki Var ki dhuni (GG, 1312).

Some scholars following *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, an eighteenth-century work, assert that these *dhunis* were added in the Holy Book under the direction of Guru Hargobind, Nanak VI. They support their assertion by stating that in the original recension of Guru Granth Sahib preserved at Kartarpur, near Jalandhar, directions as to *dhunis* were written in a different pen above or in between the lines. But Bhai Jodh Singh who, along with Professor Teja Singh and Ganga Singh, minutely researched this rare manuscript in 1945, affirms that the *dhunis* were recorded by Bhai Gurdas who originally transcribed the sacred volume, there being no change of hand. Bhai Jodh Singh's finding is that a finer pen has been used by him in recording *dhunis* above or in between the lines as he has done at places elsewhere to mark *mahala* indicating authorship of the verses.

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M. G. S.

DIVAN (**Taran Singh**), in Persian, means royal court, conference, audience. Appearing as *diban* or *dibanu* in Guru Nanak's compositions, the word stands for both the divine court of justice and the law courts of the State. In the Sikh tradition, *divan* has come to mean the court of the Guru or a congregation in the name of the Guru. The Guru was addressed by Sikhs as *Sachcha Patishah* or True King whose audience was given the name of *divan* or court. As the office of Guru became vested in the Guru Granth Sahib, any assembly in the hall or court where the Sacred Volume was installed was called the *divan*. A gathering of devotees in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib at which holy hymns are sung and the holy Name is meditated upon is a *divan*. Nowadays Sikh social and political gatherings and conferences, with Scripture presiding over them, are also designated *divans*. The term nevertheless applies primarily to Sikh religious assemblies in *gurdwaras* or elsewhere.

At a Sikh *divan*, Guru Granth Sahib is seated on a high pedestal or throne. Sikhs enter reverentially with folded hands and kneel down touching the ground in front of it with their foreheads and making offerings, usually money. They will, thereafter, greet the assembly, and, where the hall is spacious enough to permit this, circumambulate the Sacred Volume in token of allegiance to the Guru before taking their seats on the ground among the *sangat*. Dispersal is in the same reverent style; the departing member will leave his seat, stand before the Guru Granth Sahib, with hands clasped, fall on his knees making a low bow and retreat respectfully, taking care not to turn his back towards the Holy Book.

In Sikh *gurdwaras* commonly two *divans* take place daily—one in the morning and the second in the evening. In the morning, the service will begin with the induction

and installation of the Guru Granth Sahib. After the *ardas* or supplicatory prayer, the Book will be opened to obtain from it what is called *hukam*, i.e. the Guru's command or lesson for the day. This will be followed by *kirtan* or chanting by a choir of musicians of holy hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib, if not of the entire composition entitled *Asa ki Var*. At larger *gurdwaras*, *kirtan* will be preceded by the recitation of Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani* and of morning *nitnem*, i.e. texts comprising the daily regimen of Sikh prayers for that hour. Then there will take place *katha* or exposition of the *hukam* of that morning or of any other hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, followed by a discourse or lecture on Sikh theology or history. Recitation of the six cantos by the whole assembly from Guru Amar Das's composition, the *Anand*, and of the last *sloka* of the *Japu, ardas,* proclamation of the *hukam* from the Guru Granth Sahib and distribution of *karahprasad* or communion will bring the *divan* to a conclusion. At the evening *divan*, besides *kirtan*, two *banis* prescribed for the service, Rahrasi and the Kirtan Sohila are recited. At the central shrine at Amritsar, the Harimander, the *divan* remains in session continuously from early hours of the morning till late in the evening, with *kirtan* being recited uninterruptedly. Special *divans* are held to mark important anniversaries of the Sikh calendar and social events in families. The format allows for variations to suit the occasion, but one binding condition is that the congregation occurs in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

T. S.

FIVE EVILS (**L**. **M**. **Joshi**) or *pancadokh* or *panj vikar* as they are referred to in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, are, according to Sikhism, the five major weaknesses of the human personality at variance with its spiritual essence. The common evils far exceed in number, but a group of five of them came to be identified because of the obstruction they are believed to cause in man's pursuit of the moral and spiritual path. The group of five evils comprises *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, and *ahankara* (*kam*, *karodh*, *lobh*, *moh* and *hankar*, in Punjabi); translated into English these words mean lust, wrath, greed, attachment and egoity, respectively. The word 'evil' here may be understood to represent the connotation of Punjabi *pap* (sin), *dokh* (defect), or *kilbikh* (defilement).

The number five (*panj*, *panca*) is traditional and has been used in a variety of contexts. One comes across repeated references to pentads in philosophy, religion, ethics, mythology and history of India. The god Siva has five faces, hence his name *Pancanana*; the Buddha analysed human personality into five aggregates (*panca-skandha*) and laid down five moral precepts (*pancasila*); the Upanisads speak of the five fires (*pancagni*) and five sheaths or wrappers investing the self (*pancakosah*); Jainism has its five vows (*pancavratas*), and the Yoga system its five abstentions (*yamas*) and five observations (*niyamas*); five are the organs of sense, five the organs of action, five the objects of sense, five the gross and subtle elements (*panca mahabhuta* or *panca tattva*). There are also the traditions of five *makaras* of Tantric Yoga, five *kakars* of later Sikhism and of the first five members of the Khalsa community and so on. The list of pentads (*pancaka*) can be lengthened. However, theologically, no special significance attaches to the number five in the group of evils except that these five human failures are believed to constitute strong hindrances to spiritual progress.

The early Vedic literature bears no reference to the concept of 'five evils'; the terms *moha*, *kama*, *krodha* and *aham* do occur in the Vedic texts, but they are not enumerated as a series of evils. Moreover, these words do not seem to have any significant relation to ethical and soteriological ideas in the Vedic age. It was the ascetic sages of non-Vedic tradition, the *munis* and *sramanas* who propounded the philosophy of renunciation and the methods of sense-control. The impact of their ideas and practices was felt by the Upanisadic teachers. Thus the Upanisads, though they do not condemn *kama* or desire, are aware of the evils like *raga* or passion, *avidya* or *nescience*, *moha* or delusion, and *ahankara* or egoity. These evils are mentioned and condemned in some of the post-Buddhistic Upanisads such as the *Prasna*, *Svetasvatara*, *Aitareya*, *Isa* and *Mundaka*. The last-named text refers to 'the sages whose defilements have been destroyed' (*ksinadosah*), although it does not enumerate the 'defilements'.

Long before these later Upanisads, however, leaders of *sramanic* philosophers had expounded soteriological techniques in which eradication of all evils and imperfections was considered *sine qua non* for ultimate release. It is in the teachings of Kapilamuni, Parsvanatha, Sakyamuni and Mahavira that one finds a detailed discussion of the nature and function of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha* and *ahankara* and many other kindred vices.

The old Pali texts contain three lists of evils and factors which obstruct meditation and moral perfection. The list of five 'hindrances' (*nivaranas*) consists of sensuous desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and sceptical doubt. These hindrances blind man's mental vision and make concentration difficult. The list of ten 'fetters' (*sanyojanas*), which bind beings to *sansara*, comprises the following: belief in a permanent

individuality, sceptical doubt, belief in the efficacy of mere moral observances and rituals, sensual passion, ill will, desire for existence in the material world, desire for existence in the immaterial world, conceit, restlessness and nescience.

The first two in the list of five hindrances, viz. sensuous desire (*kamacchanda*) and ill will or malice are the same as the first two in the list of five evils mentioned in the Sikh canon. Likewise, belief in a permanent individuality (*satkayadrsti*), sensual passion (*kamaraga*), ill will, conceit (*mana*) and nescience (*avidya*), included in the Buddhist list of ten fetters, are comparable to egoity, lust, wrath, pride and delusion or attachment of Sikh enumeration.

The third Buddhist list of ten 'defilements' (Pali *kilesa*, Punjabi *kalesh* and Skt. *klesa*), includes the following: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*mana*), false views, sceptical doubt, sloth, distraction, shamelessness and recklessness. In this list, again, the first four defilements are nearly identical with those included in the list of' 'five evils' minus lust (*kama*). This last evil is mentioned separately and repeatedly in the Buddhist scriptures in Pali as well as in Sanskrit. Similarly wrath (*krodha*) is mentioned separately as a powerful enemy of holy life. Early Buddhist sources describe the triad of *lobha*, *dosa* (*dvesa*), and *moha* as the three roots of evil (*akusala-mula*). One of the standard Buddhist words for evil is *klesa* which may be translated as 'defilement' or 'depravity'. A list of six defilements is found in some Buddhist Sanskrit sources and includes passion (*raga*), ill will (*pratigha*), conceit (*mana*), nescience (*avidya*), false view (k*udrsti*), and sceptical doubt (*vichikitsa*).

The Jaina sources also contain details concerning evils and defilements. All the five evils of the Sikh list are found repeatedly mentioned in the sacred literature of

Jainism. The *Avasyakasutra* has a list of eighteen sins which includes among others wrath (*krodha*), conceit, delusion (*maya*), greed, and ill will. The standard Jaina term for evil is 'dirt' or 'passion' (*kasaya*). The *Dasavaikalikasutra* states that four *kasayas*, viz. wrath, conceit, delusion and greed, cause rebirth. The *Uttaradhyayanasutra* mentions *moha*, *trsna* (synonym of *kama*) and *lobha* as the sources of sorrow.

The *Yogasutra* (II. 3) has a list of five defilements or hindrances called *panca-klesah*. These are nescience (*avidya*), egoity (*asmita*), passion (raga), ill will (dvesa) and the will to live (*abhinivesa*). It should be pointed out here that *avidya* equals *moha*; *asmita* is identical with *ahankara*; *raga* is similar to *kama*; *dvesa* is not different from *krodha*; and *abhinivesa* belongs to the category of *lobha* understood as continuous desire for existence in *sansar*.

The *Bhagavad-gita* mentions all the five evils although they are not enumerated as forming a pentad. The text mentions *kama* as desire or wish and at one point it is identified with *krodha*. Besides *kama* and *krodha* the Bhagavad-gita mentions passion (*raga*), ill will, attachment, delusion, egoity, greed, conceit and nescience (*ajnana*), and employs terms such as *papa*, *dosa* and *kalmasa* for impurities or defilements. In one verse hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, wrath, harsh speech and nescience are described as demoniac qualities. Medieval Buddhist, Jainist, and Brahmanical authors of religious and philosophical works continued to discuss the meaning, nature and methods of eradicating the five and more evils. The Tantric adepts (*siddhas*) recommended rather radical techniques of combating the evil psychological forces, especially through the method of 'conquering passions through passions'. Reference may be made here to Tulasidasa who, in a series of quadriparti verses (*chaupais*) in his *Ramacharitamanasa*, acknowledges the

universality of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mana* and *trsna* which afflict not only men but also the gods.

There is no philosophical or theological explication of the five evils, collectively or individually, in Sikh Scripture, but man is repeatedly warned against them. They have been called diseases or maladies which afflict human beings with disastrous effects. The evil pentad is however mentioned at numerous places in the Holy Book. In at least five instances the list consists of the following: *kam*, *krodh*, *lobh*, *moh* and *abhiman* or *ahankar*. At one place instead of *moh* and *abhiman* we have *mad* and *ninda*. Here the word *mad* may be interpreted in the sense of 'intoxication born of egoity'. The word *ninda* means slander. In two of the seven instances cited here the members of the evil pentad are called 'five thieves' (*panch-chor*). In a hymn by Kabir the list has *trishna* (craving), *kam*, *krodh*, *mad* and *matsar* as the five evils. The word *trishna* (Skt. *trsna*) means craving or desire, while the word *matsar* means jealousy. Often the five evils are referred to as 'the five' (*panch*) or 'al1 the five' (*sare panch*). At places the five organs of sense (*jnanendriyas*) are also often referred to as 'the five'.

One, two, three or four of the five cardinal evils are repeatedly mentioned almost throughout the body of the Sikh canon. The triad *kam*, *krodh* and *lobh* finds as frequent a mention as the triad *kam*, *krodh* and *ahankar* or *moh*, *lobh* and *ahankar*. Among the five evils the one that is condemned more than the others is *ahankar*. When only two of the five are mentioned, the pair consists either of *kam* and *krodh*, or of *moh* and *guman*, or of *lobh* and *moh*; when a group of four out of the five evils is cited, it usually consists of the first four, *kam*, *krodh*, *lobh* and *moh*. Since the Sikh canon is a composite text containing the religious poetry not only of the Gurus but also of several saints and Sufis from

various regions, synonyms, occasionally from different languages, occur. Thus *lobh* is also called *lalach*; *man* is called *garab* (Skt. *garva*) and *guman*; *moh* is also called bharam (Skt. *bhrama*).

A word of most frequent occurrence is *haumai*. It is perhaps derived from *aham*, 'I' or egoity, the essential element of ego; *hankar*, *ahankar* are its semantic cognates. The word *man* is employed in a double sense; sometimes it is clearly used in the sense of 'honour' or 'respect'. In most cases, however, it is synonymous with *abhiman*.

Although it is permissible to identify *haumai* with *ahankar*, the fact that *haumai* is not included in the evil pentad and yet comes in for the strongest censure in the Scripture would lead to the conclusion that it is regarded as a major evil in addition to those forming the pentad. It may be added that *haumai* or egoity, self-centredness, the personality system, the belief in one's individual existence, is the basis of all the other evils. From this standpoint, *ahankar* may be reckoned as an offshoot of *haumai*. The assertion or affirmation of 'I' runs counter to the affirmation of 'Thou'; the consciousness of 'self existence' or 'one's own existence' (*sva-bhava* or *atma-bhava*) is diametrically opposed to the consciousness of God's existence. In a system in which the sole reality of God (*ik onkar*) is the first principle, there can be no room for the reality of an 'individual existence' or 'one's own existence' apart from or along with the existence of God. To say that God alone is the reality means that there is no other reality that belongs to someone else, and that there is no someone else who can claim an independent reality of his own. The truth is that there is no truth in *haumai*.

Nevertheless, this unreal reality, this false truth—*haumai*—apparently exists. It is unreal and false from the standpoint of God who is the only absolute Reality; it is real

and true from the standpoint of the fettered creatures coursing in *sansar*. These creatures have assumed a reality of their own; every fettered being is seemingly convinced of its own existence; this conviction flourishes in its ignorance of God's reality. There can be no such thing as co-existence of God and not-God; Reality and falsity cannot co-exist as cannot light and darkness. Therefore, where there is awareness of God's reality there is absence of one's own reality, and vice versa; where there is awareness of one's own existence or *haumai*, there is absence of the awareness of God's existence. The Scripture says: "*Haumai jai ta kant samai*—God is realized only when one eradicates egoity" (GG, 750); literally, '(one) merges into (one's) Lord only when (her/his) egoity has disappeared'.

The five evils, lust, wrath, greed, attachment and egoity, flourish on the soil of the belief in one's individualized existence. By destroying the doctrine of one's own existence or the belief in one's individual reality, the sages (*sant, sadh*) cancel in one stroke, as it were, the entire catalogue of evils. Desire, anger, avarice, infatuation, egoism, passion, jealousy, hypocrisy, pride, deception, falsehood, violence, doubt, and nescience and other forms of depravity listed in the Guru Granth Sahib do not affect him who has overcome his own self and found his essence in God's reality. Liberation (*mukti, mokh*) means the extinction of all the evils headed by *haumai*.

The Sikh canon also points to the way of extinguishing evils of all kinds. It is acknowledged that the five evils afflict all beings in *sansar* and that it is difficult to control them. Yet the possibility of conquering them is not ruled out in the theological framework of Sikhism; the moral training of a Sikh is in fact directed towards controlling the senses and eradicating the evils. The seeker of liberation has first to liberate himself

of the yoke of the pentad. No headway can be made towards God-realization without discarding the cardinal evils. Kabir says, "He alone cherishes the Lord's feet who is rid of desire, wrath, greed and attachment—*kamu krodhu lobhu mohu bibarjit haripadu chinai soi* (GG, 1123).

Loving devotion (*bhagati, bhakti*) to God is, according to Sikhism, the way to ultimate release. One can love God only when one has annihilated self-love; this means that the devotee must be humble and surrender himself fully unto God. The Gurus stress the necessity of taking refuge in God. To this end, one must first renounce pride (*man*). Constant awareness of God (*simran*) is the panacea for all ills. He who enshrines the Lord's lotus feet in his heart destroys sins of many existences. Devotion to God eradicates the evils in an instant and purifies the body (GG, 245). The destruction of evils may be viewed both as a cause and consequence of the practice of *nam simran*. Awareness of God's presence comes only when lust, wrath, avarice, attachment and egoity have departed from the devotee; when the devotee lives in constant awareness of God, the evils touch him not. Such a person is unaffected by pleasure and pain, for he has freed himself from evils such as *lobh*, *moh* and *abhiman*. Guru Tegh Bahadur describes such a sage as one liberated while still alive and calls him an image of God on earth (GG, I426-27).

Another way of overcoming *haumai* and other evils is to keep the company of the saints (*sant*, *sadh*) who radiate virtuous qualities. One kills lust, wrath, greed and other depravities of the evil age (*kali-kales*) by taking refuge in the *sangat*, the holy fellowship. It is by discarding the most powerful of evils, egoity, that one can get admission to this sacred society. Egoity ceases as one takes to the company of the holy (GG, 271). A third

method of overcoming the evils is to submit oneself to the instruction of the spiritual preceptor (*guru*). He who would overcome the five evils must follow his teaching. The wisdom obtained from the preceptor is like a swift sword (*kharagu karara*) which cuts through confusion, infatuation, avarice and egoity (GG, 1087). One celebrates God's virtues through the favour of the sage (*sant prasadi*) and destroys lust, anger and insanity born of egoism (*unmad*). In Guru Nanak's *Sidh Gosti* it is stated that without the preceptor one's efforts bear no fruit. The importance of living up to the instruction of the holy preceptor can be judged from the concept of the 'Guru-oriented person' (*gurmukh*) so central to the Sikh moral system. A *gurmukh* is one who has turned his face towards the Guru, that is to say, a person who by practising what the Guru teaches has freed himself from the depravities and lives in the Divine presence. He achieves this position by conquering the evils under the guidance of the Guru and ever remains in tune with the Supreme Reality.

See AHANKAR, KAM, KRODH, LOBH and MOH.

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L. M. J.

FIVE KHANDS (**Ram Singh**) or Padj Khands, *lit*. realms (panj = five, khand = region or realm), signifies in the Sikh tradition the five stages of spiritual progress leading man to the Ultimate Truth. The supporting text is a fragment from Guru Nanak's *Japu*, stanzas 34 to 37. The Five Realms enumerated therein are *dharam khan*d, the realm of righteous action (pauri 34), *gian khand*, the realm of knowledge (*pauri* 35), *saram khand*, the realm of spiritual endeavour (pauri 36), *karam khand*, the realm of grace, and *sach khand* the realm of Truth (pauri 37). The concept of the spiritual journey running into several stages is found in other religious traditions as well. The number of stages and the nomenclature may vary, but the broad features of the journey remain the same. The seven *muqamat* of the Sufis, the eight *angas* of Patanjal yoga, the five *kosas* of Vedanta and *dash bhumis* of Buddhism run on parallel lines though they are embedded each in a different cultural milieu.

The *Panj Khands* in the *Japu* delineate the different stages of spiritual ascent tracing the evolution of human consciousness on different planes involving man's thought, emotions and action. Though Guru Nanak does not explicitly deal with these transformations and only touches upon the core characteristics of each stage (*khand*), yet the emphasis on one aspect does not exclude the others. In each stage, the status or position of the individual is set forth in a social setting. The seeker is not conceived of as a recluse or ascetic: social obligations and moral qualities form an essential core of the spiritual path. The empirical mind is first emancipated from the grip of desire and purified by a rigorous moral discipline. When it learns to stand still, it is brought to the Divine Portal which it can enter only with the divine grace. There it finds itself face to face with the Truth Eternal, i.e. God.

The delineation of the Panj Khands is preceded by two introductory remarks in the two preceding stanzas. First, there is the term *pavarian*, i.e. rungs of a ladder, denoting stages of the mystical ascent. Guru Nanak relates this ascent to the constant remembrance of His Name. Then occurs another insight which implies that all the endeavours that the spiritual aspirant makes and all the means that he employs during these endeavours have their ultimate source in divine grace without which he may not even feel the initial impulse towards spiritual life.

The first stage is the *dharam khand*. "The earth exists for *dharma* to be practised." The word *dharam* has been employed in the sense of duty. Duty is usually performed either out of a sense of social responsibility or through moral awareness. Guru Nanak links this sense of duty to man's consciousness of divine justice. This is the stage in which a sense of inquisitiveness is aroused in the mind of the devotee who is now no longer a casual onlooker of the world around but can perceive the divine purpose behind the creation of this planet of ours, the earth, which is set in the cosmic cradle of time and space and is sustained by the vital elements. Man has been placed in this world to respond to the Creator's purpose. In His court, he will be judged according to his moral response.

The next is *gian khand*. "In the realm of knowledge, knowledge is ignited, i.e. illumination dawns." The seeker here becomes aware of the universe and the mystery of existence. Through the creation, he gains knowledge of the Creator from whom it emanates. Knowledge here is not merely intellectual or sensual; it is intuitive awareness, a spiritual consciousness which expands the vision of the seeker. His sense of wonder is born not merely of his awareness of the many forms of life or the ordered movement of

numerous celestial spheres, but of his perception of God who is the sole force behind all. In front of this limitless variety of cosmic life, he feels humble. This simultaneous experience of expansion of vision and of the sense of humility leads to *vismaya* or *vismad* (wonder).

Saram Khand is the sphere of spiritual endeavour. Here man strives against the last remnants of his ego which still afflict him in spite of his experiencing strong emotions of humility in the *gian khand*. If the sense of awe and wonder is not accompanied or followed by discipline, the experience might become a mere emotion, something remembered with nostalgia but having no permanent worth. To become worthy of receiving the divine grace, one must chisel one's *surati* (consciousness) which is a unifying thread for all human faculties. This chiselling of intellect and wisdom would erase even the subtlest layers of ego from one's mind.

Karam Khand (the realm of grace) is the sphere where reigns the Divine grace. The process of liberation with grace initiated is now brought to completion. All sense of dualism ends. The devotee is one with the Lord and with those who have attained this state of bliss. One reaches here only after achieving a heroic victory over the evils. Yet he is not a passive devotee, but a man of awakened courage and great deeds.

The final stage of spiritual ascent, i.e. *sach khand* (the realm of the Truth), defies description. "Hard as steel is the story of this state to narrate." Described as the abode of the Nirankar, the Formless One, *sach khand* is not a geographical spot, but the final state of the evolution of human consciousness. One can only experience it, but not describe it, for here words cease to have any meaning and no analogies can help in describing the Unique. Here in the Divine Court, the perfect ones rejoice in His presence. It is from

here that His Will (*hakam*) goes out to the universe, and the liberated, grace-filled souls perform it joyously and effortlessly. The devotee becomes one with Him and realizes Him as a unifying force working through all objects of His creation. This way he attains to the non-spatial *sach khand* and to the Dweller therein, the Nirankar, who is nowhere outside his own heart.

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Rm. S.

FIVE SYMBOLS (**J. S. Neki)**, a set of five distinctive features or elements of personal appearance or apparel that set off Sikhs from the followers of any other religious faith. Any study of religious symbols involves a dual task: first, to explain the meaning of symbols not only in terms of their original connotations but also on the basis of contemporary categories of understanding; secondly, to discriminate between genuine symbolism and any *post hoc* interpretations which later times may have imposed on things originally having little symbolic relevance.

A symbol is generally defined as something that stands for, represents or denotes something else, especially a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as being an idea, quality or condition. Words, phrases and sentences, for instance, represent various beings, ideas, qualities or conditions. Like any other religion, Sikhism also incorporates in its thought and practice a variety of symbols. Most of the philosophical terms such as *maya, kal*, *mukti, anhad nad*, are used in Sikhism in common with other religions of Indian origin; but there are others especially modified or coined by the Gurus precisely to mark their new connotations. Of the modified verbal symbols the most significant is Guru Nanak's *Ik Oankar*. Ultimate Reality was the mystic monosyllable *Om*, which appeared first in the Upanisads as the object of profound religious meditation. In later times *Om* came to represent the Hindu triad, Brahma, Visnu and Siva. By Guru Nanak's time the more popular use of the term which equated the three mythical gods with their Creator, the Supreme One, had gained ground. Guru Nanak modified the term by prefixing the figure "I" to Onkar to stress the unicity of the Ultimate Reality. This made Sikhism a strictly monotheistic creed. Examples of symbolic terms originally coined or introduced by the Gurus are *nam*, the manifest equivalent of the

Transcendent One; *hakam* standing for Divine Will or Divine Law; *nadar* meaning Divine grace: *Akal*, the Timeless One, i.e. God; *Sarb Loh*, lit. all-steel, representing the All-Powerful God. Another original term in Sikhism is *Vahiguru* (lit. Hail! the Enlightener who dispels Darkness) for God. As the figures of *Om* and *swastika* symbolize Hinduism, the crescent and the numerals 786 denote Islam, and the cross signifies Christianity, there are symbols which define and individuate Sikhism. There are symbols peculiar to the Sikhs and their use gives them their identity and marks them off as a distinct people. For example, their *mul mantra*, in abbreviated form, the statement of their fundamental creed is used as a preamble to their religious writings. It is set down at the top of their private correspondence as well. It is also superimposed as a crest on their flag. Another form of the crest is a composite figure of *khanda* (double-edged sword), a *chakra* (steel quoit) and two swords joined close together at the bottom symbolizing strength and sovereignty of the *Khalsa*. The Sikh flag, reverently called *nishan sahib* (*sahib*, added as an honorific) comprising a high-flying pennant, yellow, saffron or dark blue in colour, with a *khanda* atop its flagpost, is commonly seen in the compound of a *gurdwara* or Sikh place of worship. The flag, the crest and the war cry *Sat Sri Akal* (True is the Exalted Timeless One) have served the Khalsa to maintain its high morale and *esprit de corps* through the ups and downs of its history. A pennant is defined as an emblem of victory but the form of salutation current among the Khalsa—*Vahiguru ji ka khalsa, Vahiguru ji ki fateh*— constantly reminds them that lest a triumph fill them with vanity, victory is always from God. Another popular and distinctive form of salutation is *Sat Sri Akal*.

Forms of salutation help to recognize the Sikhs as individuals and also as a community formed around the religion called Sikhism. But the most prominent distinguishing marks of the Sikhs, especially of the members of the Khalsa brotherhood, are what are commonly called the *panj kakars*, from each of the five articles beginning with the letter "k". The initiation ceremony called *amrit sanchar*, repeating the original ceremony that canonized the order of the Khalsa on the Baisakhi day of AD 1699, is itself symbolic of imparting a new immortal life to the initiates. During the ceremony every initiate into the order is enjoined upon to adopt and never to part from his person five symbolic physical objects—*kes* (unshorn hair), *kangha* (a comb), *kirpan* (sword), *kara* (a steel bracelet) and *kachchha* or *kachhahira* (a pair of specially designed shorts)—all names beginning with the phoneme 'k' and hence collectively called *panj kakar* (*panj*=five; *kakar* = symbols). The numeral *panj* (five) itself has a symbolic significance in Sikh usage. Physical bodies, it is believed, are made of *five* elements; there are *five khands* (regions or stages) in the ascent to the point of realization of the highest spiritual truth; the traditional village council, *panchayat*, consists of *five* members in the popular belief that where five *panches* have assembled together (for the sake of administering justice), there God Himself is present; it is *panj piare* (the Five Elect) who prepared and administered *amrit* (the holy initiatory water) to novitiates; *five banis*(scriptural texts) are recited as *amrit* is being prepared; the Sikhs own *five takhts* as the seats of the highest religious authority and legislation; and traditionally for the daily religious devotions a regimen of *five banis* is laid down. Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636), records: As one Sikh is sufficient to announce his identity, two of them make up the holy congregation. Among

five of them God himself is present (iku *sikhu dui sadh sangu panjin paramesaru*), *Varan*, XIII.19.

The five k's may be regarded as parts of the uniform of the Khalsa which is defined as Akal ki Fauj, God's own army, created to fulfil the divinely ordained mission of Guru Gobind Singh, viz. *dharam chalavan, sant ubaran dust sabhan ko mul uparan*— to uphold *dharma*, protect the saintly and uproot the wicked (*Bachitra Natak*, 6). There is nothing esoteric or mystic about the five k's. They were simply chosen to serve as aids to the preservation of the corporate life of the Panth. It, however, seems to be essential for a social symbol to contain something of the nature of an archetypal kernel so that it may appeal rationally as well as emotively to the collective consciousness of the community and thereby acquire wide acceptance and emotional sway over the minds of men.

Kes or the unshorn hair imprint on the individual the investiture of the spiritual man exemplified by *rishis* or sages of yore, and even of God Himself (whose epithet *keshava* means one who carries long tresses, although, it must be remembered, the God of Sikhism is Formless and is occasionally personalized only for the sake of explanation of the attributes by which He is remembered). They also signify manliness, virility, courage and dignity, and therefore signify qualities both of a *sant* (saint) and a *sipahi* (soldier) and a life both of *bhakti* (spiritual devotion) and *shakti*, i.e. strength of conviction, of courage, and of fortitude.

The vow to leave the hair untrimmed also signifies a disavowal of the cultic path of renunciation and asceticism marked among the practitioners by closely cropped hair or by keeping them matted.

. Long-winded explanations on scientific grounds of the advantages of full-grown hair sometimes advanced are really unnecessary. It is enough to say that the Sikhs keep their hair untrimmed and uncut first because it is one of their religious vows and secondly because it is a clear mark of identification. Guru Nanak said, "if you see a Sikh of the Guru, bow low and fall at his feet" (GG. 763). Rahitnamas enjoin upon every Sikh to entertain and assist others. A Sikh will be the easiest to know from his long hair.

Kangha (the comb required to keep the hair tidy) symbolizes cleanliness. As a vestural symbol, it appears to repudiate the practice of Tantric yogis, who keep their hair matted (*jata*) as their outward denominational symbol.

Kirpan (the sword) signifies valour. It seems to represent what has been called "the sword of God in heavenly regions" (Isaiah, XXXIV, 5). For Guru Gobind Singh the sword was the emblem of Divine Energy for the destruction of the evil and protection of the good. Also called *bhagauti* (*bhagvati* or the goddess Durga, slayer of the demons) which in the Sikh vocabulary stands for the sword as well as for the Almighty. It is invoked at the very beginning of *ardas*, supplicatory prayer of the Sikhs.

The word *kirpan* seems to have been compounded from *kirpa* (*krpa* or compassion) and *an* (honour, dignity). Hence as a symbolic weapon it shall only be wielded in compassion (to protect the oppressed) and for upholding righteousness and human dignity. It stands, therefore, for the heroic affirmation of honour and valour for the vindication of ethical principles.

Kara (the steel bangle) was adopted as a pragmatic accessory to *kirpan*. A set of strong steel bangles used to be worn by warriors as protective armour over the arm that wielded the sword. But besides the symbolism of self defence that its pragmatic value

seems to indicate, it has a deeper symbolic significance. As a circle it signifies perfection, without beginning, without end. Traditionally, a circle also represents *dharma*, the Supreme Law, and Divine justice. It also symbolizes restraint and control. The *kara*, therefore, symbolizes for the Sikhs a just and lawful life of self-discipline (*rahit*) and self-control (*sanjam*).

Kachchh or *Kachhahira* (pair of shorts) is a sartorial symbol signifying manly control. It contradicts the puritanical vows of chastity and celibacy (of *sannyasa*). At the pragmatic level, its sartorial design makes for greater agility and easy movements, thereby ensuring ready preparedness, *tayyar bar tayyar*, (readiness beyond ordinary readiness).

Of these five symbols, primacy unquestionably belongs to *kes*. It is the Sikhs' *kes* which rescued them from a critical situation. Unwarily, they had succumbed to a process of backsliding. The decline had in fact set in during the days of Sikh power. The stern religious discipline which had sustained the Sikhs through a period of difficulty and privation gave way to a life of luxury and plenty. They lost what, following Ibn Khaldun, may be described as their "desert qualities." A second—and even more sinister—debilitating factor was the Brahmanical ritual and practice which had gained ascendancy as an adjunct of regal pomp and ceremony. These now took a firmer hold over the Sikh mind. In this way, Sikh faith became garbled beyond recognition. The teachings of the Gurus which had supplied Sikhism its potent principle of re-creation and consolidation were obscured by the rising tide of conservatism. It was fast losing its characteristic vigour and its votaries were relapsing into beliefs and customs which the founding Gurus had clearly rejected. Absorption into ceremonial Hinduism indicated the course

inevitably set for the Sikhs. This was the critical challenge they faced in the years following the British occupation of the Punjab.

Such had been the dereliction of the faith that several British observers prognosticated dismally for it. Some thought it was already dead; others felt it was irretrievably due for extinction. The following excerpt from the Punjab Administration Report for 1851-52—a bare two years after the annexation of the Punjab—will illustrate:

> The Sikh faith and ecclesiastical polity is rapidly going where the Sikh political ascendancy has already gone. Of the two elements in the old Khalsa, namely, the followers of Nanuck, the first prophet, and the followers of Guru Govind Singh, the second great religious leader, the former will hold their ground, and the latter will lose it. The Sikhs of Nanuck, a comparatively small body of peaceful habits and old family, will perhaps cling to the faith of their fathers; but the Sikhs of Govind [Singh] who are of more recent origin, who are more specially styled the Singhs or "lions" and who embraced the faith as being the religion of warfare and conquest, no longer regard the Khalsa now that the prestige has departed from it. These men joined in thousands, and they now desert in equal numbers. They rejoin the ranks of Hinduism whence they originally came, and they bring up their children as Hindus. The sacred tank at Umritsar is less thronged than formerly, and the attendance at the annual festivals is diminishing yearly. The initiatory ceremony for adult persons is now rarely performed.

It was the late nineteenth century renaissance, the Singh Sabha movement, which halted this relapse into Hinduism by, besides preaching Sikh religious doctrine, laying

stress on the initiatory rite of Khande di Pahul and meticulous observation of the mandatory *panj kakar*, the Five Symbols.

Along with *kes*, the turban became a crucial symbol, too. Sikhs cherish the greatest respect for it. They must not cut or shingle their hair and they must keep their heads covered with turbans. It may be observed how lovingly, painstakingly, proudly and colourfully they adorn their heads with neatly-tied crown-like turbans. As Sikh history testifies, depilatory apostasy is the greatest sin among them. It is for this reason that they introduced into their regular petitionary prayer, they call *ardas*, words to this effect: Lord preserve our faith until our last breath and until the last hair on our bodies.

These symbols, being the gift of the Guru also possess a sacramental status. They are held dear as keepsakes of the Tenth Guru who had completely identified himself with his Khalsa. A keepsake essentially symbolizes a relationship of love. These symbols, therefore, also signify the Sikhs' love for their Guru as also his for them.

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J. S. N

GIAN (**Dharam Singh, Major Gurmukh Singh**)(Skt. *jnana*), knowledge, understanding or consciousness, is what differentiates human beings from the animal world and establishes the superiority of *homo sapiens* over the other species. Nature has not only provided man with a qualitatively superior brain but has also endowed human mind with a dynamic inner stimulus called *jagiasa* (Skt. *jijnasa*), desire to know, inquisitiveness. Perhaps it is on account of this urge for knowledge and the consequent exercise that human brain or mind (psyche or soul for the ancients) gradually developed over the millennia. *Gian* consists in man's capacity to distinguish various forms, colours, sounds, smells or their compounds in the shape of objects in the phenomena surrounding him through his sense perceptions. It also includes an understanding of his thoughts, sentiments, feelings and emotions which, though conditioned by external stimuli, are yet the formulation or creation of his own mind. *Gian* is acquired or gathered through the mental faculties of cognition (process of knowing) and affection (affective process pertaining to feelings and emotions). The mind also possesses a third faculty, conation (concerning desire and volition), which is closely related to and interacts with cognition and affection. Epistemological theories are broadly classified as materialism and idealism. While the materialists regard the mind, consciousness or spirit as the product of material world, or nature, the idealists hold that nature and material world are the product of consciousness, of spirit, which is independent of the material world.

In the religious context the idealist view takes precedence over the materialist. Even the primal man must have noticed through experience a twofold division in phenomena. Some things existed and events happened in an orderly or regular manner so that they were easier to understand by personal experience. These formed for the aboriginal mind its natural world. But there was another world of experience, the extraordinary or supernatural, which was baffling and difficult to understand. This was

the world of belief, which formed the earliest religion of magic, sorcery, necromancy and witchcraft, traces of which persisted even during the later civilized ages in the form of superstitions, rituals and forms of worship. Knowledge (*gian*) thus came to be classified as natural or ordinary and spiritual or mystical. In Greek philosophy especially in the works of Plato or Aristotle, for instance, words used are *episteme* for ordinary and *gnosis* for spiritual knowledge in opposition to *doxa* (belief).

In India, too, *gian* is divided into two categories: *paragian* (higher or spiritual knowledge) and *aparagian* (lower or worldly knowledge). In practice, the word *gian* in philosophical sense usually refers to *paragian*, also called *atmagian*, and the highest knowledge is termed *brahmagian*, the awareness and understanding of the Ultimate Reality. The earliest Indian religious text, the *Rgveda*, though mainly comprising hymns of praise and prayer addressed to personalized powers of Nature, does contain some speculative hymns. *Brahmanas* only describe rituals by means of myths. It is the *Upanisads* which are devoted primarily to religious speculation using rational tools. Advait Vedanta defines *gian* as self-effulgent (*svaya-prakas*). No other knowledge is required to know it. The self- effulgent *gian* enlightens human minds and eradicates the darkness of ignorance (*agian* or *avidya*). Metaphors of day and night and of light and darkness have been extensively used in Indian religious literature for *jnana* and *ajnana*, respectively.

Sikhism, without rejecting empirical perceptual knowledge, holds *gian* (spiritual knowledge) definitely superior and more desirable than ordinary knowledge. Guru Nanak beautifully illustrates *gian* vis-à-vis worldly knowledge in *Japu* (*ji*). After referring to, in stanza XXXIV, the perceptual phenomenon of day and night, changing seasons, the

elements amidst which is set the Earth for practising *dharma* (righteous actions or righteousness), stanza XXXV depicts *gian khand*, the region of true knowledge, as illimitable expanse of myriad *karam bhumis* (lands of action), suns, moons and universes. The comparison clearly brings out that *gian* consists in directing the mind from the limited realities and concerns of this puny Earth towards the limitlessness of the True Reality depicted as *sach khand* and finally defined as inexplicable in stanza XXXVII. Elsewhere *gian* itself is said to be inexplicable and available through grace to the exclusion of other wayward efforts (GG, 465). It is also acquired by listening to *nam* (God's Name), having faith in it, internalizing it with love and delving deep into the inner recesses of one's mind (*Japu*, xxi), i.e. through reason, contemplation and meditation. That the jewel of *gian* or understanding of Ultimate Reality lies within one's self and may be had by listening to Guru's advice, subject of course to God's grace, has been stressed again and again in the Sikh Scripture (GG, 2, 102, 425, 569, 644, 684, 1002, 1378). Faith has of course been prescribed as essential, but stress is also placed on *vichar* (reason or contemplation). Another crucial factor to attainment of *gian* is the Guru whose words and whose favour are the key to true understanding. Guru for the Sikhs, after the ten prophets from Guru Nanak (1469-1539) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), is their Word embodied as Guru Granth Sahib. Company of holy men (*sant*) and holy assembly *satisangat* is also highly commended as being instrumental in the attainment of *gian*. Mere intellectualism and sophistry are, on the other hand, decried as useless wrangling detrimental to body and mind (GG, 230).

Knowledge attained by super-rational and super-sensuous faculties is intuitive and mystical in nature. It is *paragian*, the highest form of knowledge. Its attainment not only

leads to emancipation of the seeker but also enables him to work for the emancipation of others. Possessor of the highest *gian*, the *brahmgiani*, is highly praised by Guru Arjan, Nanak V, and is even equated with God Himself (GG, 272-74).

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D. S

M. G. S.

GOD IN SIKHISM (**G. S. Talib**), a term used to denote any object of worship or evocation, signifies the belief of most modern religions in the existence of a Supreme Being who is the source and support of the spatio-temporal material world. Theologians remember Him by the name of God. The fundamental belief of Sikhism, too, is that God exists, not merely as an idea or concept, but as a Real Being, indescribable yet not unknowable. The Gurus, however, never theorized about proofs of the existence of God. For them He is too real and obvious to need any logical proof. Guru Arjan, Nanak V, says, "God is beyond colour and form, yet His presence is clearly visible" (GG, 74), and again, "Nanak's Lord transcends the world as well as the scriptures of the east and the west, and yet he is clearly manifest" (GG, 397). In any case, knowledge of the ultimate Reality is not a matter for reason; it comes by revelation of Himself through *nadar* or grace and by *anubhava* or mystical experience. Says Guru Nanak, "*budhi pathi na paiai bahu chaturaiai bhai milai mani bhane* (He is not accessible through intellect, or through mere scholarship or cleverness at argument; He is met, when He pleases, through devotion) " (GG, 436).

Sikhism as a religion is uncompromisingly monotheistic. The Gurus have described God in numerous ways in their hymns included in the Guru Granth Sahib, but the unicity of the deity is consistently emphasized throughout. Briefly, God for the Sikhs as described in the *mul mantra*, basic formula of the faith, viz. *Ik oankar satinamu karta purakhu nirbhau nirvairu akal murati ajuni saibhan gurprasadi*, is the "One Supreme Being, the Immutable and Eternal Name, the Creative Masculine Principle, Without fear and Without rancour, the Timeless Verity, Unincarnated and Self-Existent, known through His grace." *Oankar* is a variation of the mystic monosyllable *Om* (also known as

anahata *nada*, the unstruck sound) first set forth in the Upanisads as the transcendent object of profound religious meditation. Guru Nanak prefixed the numeral one (*ik*) to it making it *Ik Oankar* or *Ekankar* to stress His oneness. He is named and known only through His immanent nature. Almost all of His names are attributive. The only name which can be said to truly fit his transcendent state is *Sati* or *Satinam* (Sanskrit *satya*), the changeless and timeless Reality. He is transcendent and all-pervasive at the same time. Transcendence and immanence are two aspects of the same single Supreme Reality. He is immanent in the entire creation, but the creation as a whole fails to contain Him fully. As says Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX, "He has himself spread out His Own *maya* which He Himself oversees; many different forms He assumes in many colours, yet he stays independent of all" (GG, 537).

God is *Karta Purakh*, the Creator-Person. He created the spatio-temporal universe not from some pre-existing physical element, but from His own Self. Universe is His own emanation. It is not *maya* or illusion but is real (*sati*) because, as say Guru Arjan, “True is He and true is His creation [because] all has emanated from God Himself” (GG 294). But God is not identical with the universe. The latter exists and is contained in Him and not vice versa. God is immanent in the created world, but is not limited by it. “Many times He expands Himself into such worlds but He ever remains the same One Ekankar" (GG, 276). Even at one time "there are hundreds of thousands of skies and nether regions" (GG, 5). Included in *sach khand*, the figurative abode of God, there are countless regions and universes" (GG, 8). Creation is "His sport which He Himself witnesses, and when He rolls up the sport, He is His sole Self again" (GG, 292). He Himself is the Creator, Sustainer and the Destroyer.

What is the Creator's purpose in creating the universe? It is not for man to enquire or judge the purpose of His Creator. To quote Guru Arjan again, "The created cannot have a measure of the Creator; what He wills, O Nanak, happens" (GG, 285). For the Sikhs, the Creation is His pleasure and play "When the showman beat His drum, the whole creation came out to witness the show; and when He puts aside his disguise, He rejoices in His original solitude" (GG, 174, 291, 655, 736).

Purakhu added to *Karta* in the Mul Mantra is the Punjabi form of Sanskrit *purusa*, which literally means, besides man, male or person, "the primeval man as the soul and original source of the universe; the personal and animating principle; the supreme Being or Soul of the universe." *Purakh* in Mul Mantra is, therefore, none other than God the Creator. The term has nothing to do with the *purusa* of the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy where it is the spirit as a passive spectator of *prakriti* or creative force.

That God is *nirbhau* (without fear) and *nirvair* (without rancour) is obvious enough as He has no *sarik* or rival. But the terms have other connotations, too. *Nirbhau* not only indicates fearlessness but also the absence of fearfulness. It also implies sovereignty and unquestioned exercise of Will. Similarly, *nirvair* implies, besides absence of enmity, the positive attributes of compassion and impartiality. Together the two terms mean that God loves His handiwork and is the Dispenser of impartial justice, *dharam-niau*. Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, says: "Why should we be afraid, with the True One being the judge. True is the True One's justice" (GG, 84).

God is *Akal Murati*, the Eternal Being. The timelessness involved in the negative epithet *akal* has made it popular in Sikh tradition as one of the names of God, the

Timeless One, as in Akal Purakh or in the slogan Sat Sri Akal (Satya Sri Akal). One of the most sacred shrines of the Sikhs is the Akal Takht, the Eternal Throne, at Amritsar. *Murati* here does not mean form, figure, image or idol. Sikhism expressly forbids idolatry or image-worship in any form. God is called Nirankar, the Formless One, although it is true that all forms are the manifestations of Nirankar. Bhai Gurdas, the earliest expounder and the copyist of the original recension of Guru Granth Sahib, says: "*Nirankar akaru hari joti sarup anup dikhaia* (The Formless One having created form manifested His wondrous refulgence" (*Varan*, XII. 17). *Murati* in the Mul Mantra, therefore, signifies verity or manifestation of the Timeless and Formless One.

God is *Ajuni*, Unincarnated, and *Saibhan* (Sanskrit *svayambhu*), Self-existent. The Primal Creator Himself had no creator. He simply is, has ever been and shall ever be by Himself. *Ajuni* also affirms the Sikh rejection of the theory of divine incarnation. Guru Arjan says: "Man misdirected by false belief indulges in falsehood; God is free from birth and death. . . May that mouth be scorched which says that God is incarnated" (GG, 1136).

The Mul Mantra ends with *gurprasadi*, meaning thereby that realization of God comes through Guru's grace. "Guru" in Sikh theology appears in three different but allied connotations, viz. God, the ten Sikh Gurus, the enlightened ones and enlighteners, and the *gur-shabad* or Guru's utterances as preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib. Of God's grace, Gurus' instruction and guidance and the scriptural *sabad* (Sanskrit, *sabda*, lit. Word), the first is the most important, because, as nothing happens without God's will or pleasure, His grace is essential to making a person inclined towards a desire and search for union with Him.

God in Sikhism is thus depicted in three distinct aspects, viz. God in Himself, God in relation to creation, and God in relation to man. God by himself is the one Ultimate, Transcendent Reality, Nirguna (without attributes), Timeless, Boundless, Formless, Ever-existent, Immutable, Ineffable, All-by Himself and even Unknowable in His entirety. The only nomenclatures that can rightly be applied to Him in this state of *sunn* (Sanskrit, *sunya* or void) are Brahma and Parbrahma (Sanskrit, Parbrahman) or the pronouns He and Thou. During a discourse with Siddhas, Hindu recluses, Guru Nanak in reply to a question as to where the Transcendent God was before the stage of creation replies, "To think of the Transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Even at that stage of *sunn*, he permeated all that Void" (GG, 940). This is the state of God's *sunn samadhi*, self-absorbed trance.

When it pleases God, He becomes *sarguna* (Sanskrit, *saguna*, with attributes) and manifests Himself in creation. He becomes immanent in His created universe, which is His own emanation, an aspect of Himself. As says Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, "This (so-called) poison, the world, that you see is God's picture; it is God's outline that we see" (GG, 922). Most names of God are His attributive, action-related signifiers, *kirtam nam* (GG, 1083) or *karam nam* (*Dasam Granth*, Japu). God in the Sikh Scripture has been referred to by several names, picked from Indian and semitic traditions. He is called in terms of human relations as father, mother, brother, relation, friend, lover, beloved, husband. Other names, expressive of His supremacy, are *thakur*, *prabhu, svami, sah, patsah, sahib, sain* (Lord, Master). Some traditional names are *ram, narayan, govind, gopal, allah, khuda*. Even the negative terms such as *nirankar, niranjan et al*. are as much related to attributes as are the positive terms like *data, datar, karta, kartar, dayal,*

kripal, qadir, karim, etc. Some terms peculiar to Sikhism are *nam* (lit. name), *sabad* (lit. word) and Vahiguru (lit. Wondrous Master). While *nam* and *sabad* are mystical terms standing for the Divine manifestation and are used as substitute terms for the Supreme Being, *Vahiguru* is an ejaculatory phrase expressing awe, wonder and ecstatic joy of the worshipper as he comprehends the immenseness and grandeur of the Lord and His Creation.

Immanence or All-pervasiveness of God, however, does not limit or in any way affect His transcendence. He is Transcendent and Immanent at the same time. The Creation is His *lila* or cosmic play. He enjoys it, pervades it, yet Himself remains unattached. Guru Arjan describes Him in several hymns as "Unattached and Unentangled in the midst of all" (GG, 102, 294, 296); and "Amidst all, yet outside of all, free from love and hate" (GG, 784-85). Creation is His manifestation, but, being conditioned by space and time, it provides only a partial and imperfect glimpse of the Timeless and Boundless Supreme Being.

That God is both Transcendent and Immanent does not mean that these are two phases of God one following the other. God is One, and He is both *nirguna* and *sarguna*. "*Nirguna sargunu hari hari mera*, (God, my God is both with and without attributes)," sang Guru Arjan (GG, 98). Guru Amar Das also had said, "*Nirguna sarguna ape soi* (He Himself is with as well as without attributes) " (GG, 128). Transcendence and Immanence are two aspects of the same Supreme Reality.

The Creator also sustains His Creation compassionately and benevolently. "My Lord is ever Fresh and ever Bountiful" (GG, 660); "He is the eradicator of the pain and sorrow of the humble" (GG, 263-64). The universe is created, sustained and moved

according to His *hukam* or Divine Will, and Divine purpose. "The inscrutable *hukam* is the source of all forms, all creatures. . . All are within the ambit of *hukam*; there is nothing outside of it." (GG, p. 1). Another principle that regulates the created beings is *karma* (actions, deeds). Simply stated, it is the law of cause and effect. The popular dictum "As one sows so shall one reap" is stressed again and again in the Guru Granth Sahib (GG, 134,176, 309, 316, 366, 706, 730).

The created world though real is not eternal. Whenever God desires, it merges back into His Timeless and Formless Self. Guru Gobind Singh calls this process of creation and dissolution *udkarkh* (Sanskrit, *utkarsana*) and *akarkh* (Sanskrit, *akarsana*), respectively: "Whenever you, O Creator, cause *udkarkh* (increase, expansion), the creation assumes the boundless body; whenever you effect *akarkh* (attraction, contraction), all corporeal existence merges in you" (*Benati Chaupai*). This process of creation and dissolution has been repeated God alone knows for how many times. A passage in the *Sukhmani* by Guru Arjan visualizes the infinite field of creation thus:

> Millions are the mines of life; millions the spheres;
>
> Millions are the regions above; millions the regions below;
>
> Millions are the species taking birth.
>
> By diverse means does He spread Himself.
>
> Again and again did He expand Himself thus,
>
> But He ever remains the One Ekankar.
>
> Countless creatures of various kinds
>
> Come out of Him and are absorbed back.
>
> None can know the limit of His Being;

He, the Lord, O Nanak! is all in all Himself.

(GG. 275-76)

Man, although an infinitesimal part of God's creation, yet stands apart from it insofar as it is the only species blessed with reflection, moral sense and potentiality for understanding matters metaphysical. In Sikhism, human birth is both a special privilege for the soul and a rare chance for the realization of union with God. Man is lord of earth, as Guru Arjan says, "Of all the eight million and four hundred thousand species, God conferred superiority on man" (GG, 1075), and "All other species are your (man's) water-bearers; you have hegemony over this earth" (GG, 374). But Guru also reminds that "now that you (the soul) have got a human body, this is your turn to unite with God" (GG, 12, 378). Guru Nanak had warned, "Listen, listen to my advice, O my mind! only good deed shall endure, and there may not be another chance" (GG, 154). So, realization of God and a reunion of *atma* (soul) with *paramatma* (Supreme Soul, God) are the ultimate goals of human life. The achievement ultimately rests on *nadar* (God's grace), but man has to strive in order to deserve His grace. As a first step, he should have faith in and craving for the Lord. He should believe that God is near him, rather within his self, and not far away. He is to seek Him in his self. Guru Nanak says: "Your beloved is close to you, O foolish bride! What are you searching outside?" (GG, 722), and Guru Amar Das reassures: "Recognize yourself, O mind! You are the light manifest. Rejoice in Guru's instruction that God is always with (in) you. If you recognize your Self, you shall know the Lord and shall get the knowledge of life and death" (GG, 441). The knowledge of the infinitesimal nature of his self when compared to the immenseness of God and His creation would instil humility in man and would rid him of his ego (a sense of I, my and

mine) which is "the greatest malady man suffers from" (GG, 466, 589, 1258) and the arch-enemy of *nam* or path to God-Realization (GG, 560). Having surrendered his ego and having an intense desire to reach his goal (the realization of Reality), the seeker under Guru's instruction (*gurmati*) becomes a *gurmukh* or person looking guruward. He meditates upon *nam* or *sabda*, the Divine Word, while yet leading life as a householder, earning through honest labour, sharing his victuals with the needy, and performing self-abnegating deeds of service. Sikhism condemns ritualism. Worship of God in the Sikh way of life consists in reciting *gurbani* or holy texts and meditation on *nam*, solitary or in *sangat* or congregation, *kirtan* or singing of scriptural hymns in praise of God, and *ardas* or prayer in supplication.

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G.S.T.

GRANTHI (**Murray J. Leaf**), from the Sanskrit *granthika* (a relater or narrator), is a person who reads the *granth*, Sanskrit *grantha* (composition, treatise, book, text). The terms are derived from the Sanskrit *grath* which means "to fasten, tie or string together, to compose (a literary work)." In Sikh usage, *granth* refers especially to the Guru Granth Sahib, the Scripture, and the term *granthi* is used for the officiant whose main duty it is to read the Holy Book in public.

The *granthi* is the principal religious official of Sikhism, but should not be thought of as a "priest" in the usual sense. Priestly offices of other major South Asian and Western religious systems typically rest on conceptions of a fundamental separation between their officers and those to whom they minister. Hereditary Brahman priests are distinct in virtue of having inherited unique religious properties such as specific texts and temples, or at least a religious rank or status that sets them inherently apart from those they serve. Priests, ministers, and rabbis in the Judeo-Christian tradition are often thought of as receiving a "calling" or "election" that others have not heard, and are ritually "ordained" into a special ministerial group within the community that sets them apart from "lay" members and entitles them to special esoteric knowledge not generally accessible. But the office of Granthi is defined by common practice and the role of Granthi in any ritual can in principle be taken by any Sikh. There is no ordination of a Granthi apart from initiation as a Sikh, and the relationship between a Granthi and any other Sikh is one of perfect equality of status and religious importance.

The Granthi is the custodian of the Holy Book in the *gurdwara*, the Sikh place of worship. He ceremonially opens it in the morning and closes it in the evening. In addition, he performs morning and evening services, which include the recitation of

specific *banis* or compositions from Scripture, and leads the *ardas* or supplicatory prayer. He may also perform or lead *kirtan*, i.e. devotional singing of the hymns. He conducts the rites of passage, and performs *path* or complete reading of the Scripture on behalf of the *sangat* (local Sikh community) or individuals and families, in the *gurdwara* or at private homes. In small villages or urban localities, he is responsible for maintaining and managing the *gurdwara* with public donations and offerings. Larger *gurdwaras* have their local managing committees with Granthis employed on regular salary. Since Sikhs do not have a hereditary priestly caste or class nor an hierarchical body of ordained priests and clergymen, any person competent to perform the duties and acceptable to local community can be appointed a Granthi. He should of course be a baptized Sikh of blameless character, leading a simple life of a householder according to the ideals and traditional code of Sikh conduct. Ideally, a Granthi is fundamentally an ideal for a Sikh in general stressing piety and humility. The Sikh Granthis generally wear turbans of white, black, blue or yellow colour, long shirts or cloaks and *churidar* trousers, in the manner of breeches with folds at the ankles. They carry a white sash or scarf hung loosely around the neck. Their duties and obligations are set out by example rather than by rule or dogma.

Historically, the first Granthi of the Sikh faith was the venerable Bhai Buddha (1506-1631), who was so designated by Guru Arjan to attend upon the Adi Granth (Holy Granth) as it was installed for the first time in Harimandar at Amritsar. This was the origin of the office. Since copies of the Adi Granth began to be made immediately after the completion of the first recension and as the number of *sangats* increased, more Granthis were needed for service. The office of Granthi became particularly significant

after the Adi Granth was proclaimed Guru by Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) just before his death. The most eminent Granthi after Bhai Buddha at Harimandar, the Golden Temple of modern days, was Bhai Mani Singh, appointed to the exalted station by Guru Gobind Singh's widow, Mata Sundari, in 1721. He met with a martyr's death in 1737. During the subsequent period of persecution and turbulence, while the Sikhs were fighting a guerrilla battle for survival, hiding in hills, forests and deserts, Sikh shrines were looked after by priests of the Nirmala and Udasi sects who being recluse *sadhus* were spared by the persecuting Mughal and Afghan rulers. Most of these early custodians or *granthis* were dedicated men and some of them were eminent scholars, too. But later, as large *jagirs* or land grants were made to these shrines by Sikh rulers, corruption crept in and the *gurdwaras* had to be freed from the hold of *mahants* (as the custodians called themselves) by launching a prolonged agitation. Ever since, the *granthis* are by and large *amritdhari* (baptized) Sikhs. They are addressed respectfully as *babaji*, *gianiji* or *bhaiji*. There exist several institutions for the training of Granthis, the best known among them being the Shahid Sikh Missionary College at Amritsar run by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, a democratically elected body legally entrusted with the management of the shrines and the conduct in general of religious affairs of the Sikhs.

M. J. L.

GURDWARA (**Fauja Singh**), lit. the Guru's portal or the Guru's abode, is the name given to a Sikh place of worship. The common translation of the term as temple is not satisfactory for, their faith possessing no sacrificial symbolism, Sikhs have neither idols nor altars in their holy places. They have no sacraments and no priestly order. The essential feature of a *gurdwara* is the presiding presence in it of Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. Ending the line of personal Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X, had installed the sacred volume in 1708 as his eternal successor. The Holy Book has since been the Guru for the Sikhs and it must reign over all Sikh places of worship where religious ceremony focuses around it. The basic condition for a Sikh place to be so known is the installation in it of the Guru Granth Sahib. Every Sikh place by that token is the house of the Guru. Hence the name Gurdwara (gur+dwara= the guru's door).

A second characteristic of a *gurdwara* is its being a public place open to all devotees to pray individually or to assemble in congregation. Its external distinguishing mark is the Nishan Sahib or the Sikh flag, saffron or blue in colour, that flies day and night atop the building, or, more often, separately close to it. In early Sikhism, the place used for congregational prayers was called *dharamsala*, the abode of *dharma*, different from the modern usage which generally limits the term to a resting place. According to the Janam Sakhis, Guru Nanak wherever he went, called upon his followers to establish *dharamsalas* and congregate in them to repeat God's Name, and to recite His praise. He himself established one at Kartarpur on the bank of the River Ravi where he settled down at the end of his extensive preaching tours. "I have set up a *dharamsal* of truth," sang Guru Arjan (1563-1606). "I seek the Sikhs of the Guru (to congregate therein) so that I may serve them and bow at their feet" (GG, 73). In the time of Guru Hargobind (1595-

1644), *dharamsals* began to be called *gurdwaras*. The change of nomenclature was significant. Guru Arjan had compiled in 1604 a Book, *pothi* or *granth* (later Guru Granth Sahib) of holy hymns. Besides his own, he had included in it the compositions of his four spiritual predecessors and of some of the Indian saints and sufis. "The *pothi* is the abode of the Divine," said he (GG, 1226). This first copy of the Granth he installed in the central Sikh shrine, the Harimandar, at Amritsar. Copies of the Granth began to be piously transcribed. The devotees carried them on their heads for installation in their respective *dharamsals*. Reverently, the Book was called the Granth Sahib and was treated as a sacred embodiment of the Gurus' revealed utterances. The *dharamsal* where Granth Sahib was kept came to be called *gurdwara*. The designation became universal after the guruship passed to the holy Book, although the central shrine at Amritsar continued to be called Harimandar or Darbar Sahib.

During the second half of the eighteenth century and after, as the Sikhs acquired territory, *gurdwaras* sprang up in most of the Sikh habitations and on sites connected with the lives of the Gurus and with events in Sikh history. Most of the historical *gurdwaras* were endowed by the ruling chiefs and nobility with liberal grants of land. This well- intentioned philanthropy, however, in many cases led to the rise of hereditary priesthood, which was brought to an end through a sustained agitation culminating in securing from the Punjab Legislative Council legislation called the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, providing for the management of the major historical Sikh shrines by a body known as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee elected through adult franchise under government auspices. This kind of democratic control is a unique ecclesiastical feature. Most of the shrines not covered by the Gurdwaras Act are

administered by committees chosen by local *sangats*. Men and women of good standing in the Sikh community may be elected to the *gurdwara* committee and anyone, male or female, may become president. As Sikhism has no priesthood, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee provides guidance to the community in religious matters.

The main function of the *gurdwara* is to provide Sikhs with a meeting-place for worship. This mainly consists of listening to the words of the Guru Granth Sahib, singing them to musical accompaniment and hearing them expounded in *katha*, or lectures: and sermons. The *gurdwara* also serves as a community centre, a school, a guest house for pilgrims and travellers, occasionally a clinic, and a base for local charitable activities. Apart from morning and evening services, the *gurdwaras* hold special congregations to mark important anniversaries on the Sikh calendar. They become scenes of much éclat and festivity when celebrations in honour of the birth anniversaries of the Gurus and of the Khalsa take place. The aspect of Sikhism most closely associated with the *gurdwara*, other than worship, is the institution of Guru ka Langar or free community kitchen which encourages commensality. *Seva* or voluntary service in Guru ka Langar is considered by Sikhs a pious duty.

The *gurdwara* and its hospitality are open to non-Sikhs as well as to members of the faith. The Sikh *rahit maryada* or code of conduct, however, contains certain rules pertaining to them. For example, no one should enter the *gurdwara* premises with one's shoes on or with head uncovered. Other rules in the *rahit maryada* concern the conduct of religious service and reverence due to the Guru Granth Sahib. Rules also prohibit discrimination in the *sangat* on the basis of religion, caste, sex or social position, and the observation of idolatrous and superstitious practices.

Unlike the places of worship in some other religious systems, *gurdwara* buildings do not have to conform to any set architectural design. The only established requirement is the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib, under a canopy or in a canopied seat, usually on a platform higher than the floor on which the devotees sit, and a tall Sikh pennant atop the building. Lately, more and more *gurdwaras* have been having buildings imitating more or less the Harimandar pattern, a mixture of Indo-Persian architecture. Most of them have square halls, stand on a higher plinth, have entrances on all four sides, and have square or octagonal domed sanctums usually in the middle. During recent decades, to meet the requirements of larger gatherings, bigger and better ventilated assembly halls with the sanctum at one end have become accepted style. The location of the sanctum, more often than not, is such as to allow space for circumambulation. Sometimes, to augment the space, verandahs are built to skirt the hall. Popular model for the dome is the ribbed lotus topped by an ornamental pinnacle. Arched copings, kiosks and solid domelets are used for exterior decorations. For functions other than purely religious, a *gurdwara* complex must provide, in the same or adjacent compound, for Guru ka Langar and accommodation for pilgrims.

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F. S.

GURMANTRA (**Taran Singh**), Punjabi Gurmantar, is that esoteric formula or term significant of the Supreme Being or the deity which the master or teacher confides to the neophyte to meditate on when initiating him into his spiritual discipline. The concept of *mantra* goes back to the pre-Vedic non-Aryan tradition and to the primitive cults of magic, animism and totemism. It has since been a continuing element one way or another in the religious traditions of the world and traces of it pervade to this day among the most modern of them. The occultist and the *tantrist* believe that *mantras* have power over the deity and can make it confer the desired boon or favour. According to the Brahmanical tradition, the universe is under the power of the gods, the gods are under the power of the *mantras* and the *mantras* are under the power of the Brahmans. The *mantras* have power over the gods or forces of Nature, but the Absolute Reality or the Supreme Being is here excluded. The *mantras* of the occultist comprised words which, in most cases, were merely weird sounds or perversions of meaningful words. The repetition, ceaseless repetition in the prescribed manner, of these was believed to prove efficacious in producing the desired result. *Mantras* also began to be culled from scriptural texts, and were used for the purpose of propitiating the gods. Similarly, certain mystic words from Scriptures were chosen to be meditated upon to win release or liberation. *Om* is the highest *mantra* in the Hindu system.

With the initiation ceremonies of different creeds developed the concept of the *gurmantra*. In Hinduism, Brahmans were the teachers. Their *gurmantras*, *mantras* imparted by *gurus* or teachers, were neither uncommon nor secret. The usual forms were Hari, Har, Rama, Hare Krsna, etc. *Sohang* (That I am) and *Ahang* (I am That) are the mystic *gurmantras* of the Vedantists. What makes a gurmantra meaningful is that it is

whispered into the ear of the disciple by the *guru*. The disciple repeats the *gurmantra* as he is told to do to realize the Supreme. Whereas the *mantras* of the *tantrists* aim at gaining worldly advantages, the *gurmantra* is meant to lead one to the ultimate objective of liberation.

In Sikhism, the *gurmantra* is neither variable nor confidential. It is not whispered into the ear of the disciple, but openly pronounced. The word *Vahiguru* has been the *gurmantra* for the Sikhs from the very beginning; *Vahiguru* is the name by which the Supreme Being is known in the Sikh tradition. Bha Gurdas (1551-1636) makes the statement "Vahiguru is the *gurmantra*; by repeating it thou hast thy ego erased," (*Varan* X111.2). In the Guru Granth Sahib, the *gurmantra* to be practised is referred to as *nam*, i.e. the Divine Name. Absorption in *nam*, i.e. constant remembrance of God's Name is repeatedly recommended. "All gains—spiritual and material—flow from concentration on *nam*" (GG, 290). "Gather the riches of God's Name; thus wilt thou earn honour in the hereafter," (GG, 1311). "Grant me the merit (O God) of remaining attached to thy Name." This *nam*, according to Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak received in a mystical experience, during his disappearance into the Bein rivulet which is described in the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* in terms of a direct communion with the Divine Lord. "As the Lord willed, Nanak the devotee was escorted to His Presence. Then a cup filled with *amrit* (nectar) was given him with the command, 'Nanak, this is the cup of Name-adoration. Drink it. . . Go, rejoice in My Name and teach others to do so. . . I have bestowed upon thee the gift of My Name. . ." It is believed that the Name Guru Nanak revealed was *Vahiguru*.

The Mul Mantra or root formula with which Sikh Scripture opens defines the Reality. The epithet *sati* (*satya* from Sanskrit as) in it means ever-existent, eternal.

Onkar, the primal word in the Mul Mantra, is for the temporal world that wonder whose name is *sat*. Vahiguru directly and verbally echoes the wondrous aspect of the Guru, here the Timeless Being. *Vahiguru* and Satinam thus convey an identical awareness, the former being implicit and the latter explicit in the Guru Granth Sahib. The Supreme Being is the ultimate Guru (GG, 357). *Gurmantra* Vahiguru means the wonderful Ever-existent Lord, the Supreme Enlightener.

Sikhism by definition is the faith of discipleship. The Guru is central to the system—the Ten who lived in person and the Guru Granth Sahib which was so apotheosized in 1708 by the last of the Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru's word is for the Sikh the Word Divine, and he is meant to live by it. He to whom the Guru imparts *nam mantra*, i.e. *gurmantra*, alone achieves perfection (GG, 1298); he receives bliss transcending all desires, (GG, 318); he has his fear and suffering annulled (GG, 51); he has himself accepted everywhere (GG, 257); and he has his sins cancelled pierced by the arrow of truth (GG, 521). *Gurmantra* acts as panacea for all ills (GG, 1002). Accursed is he who is devoid of *gurmantra* (GG, 1356-57). *Gurmantra* fixes one's mind on Him Who pervades everywhere (GG, 1357).

The initiation ceremony in early Sikhism was known as *charanamrit* or *charan pahul*, i.e. baptism by water from the holy foot (*charan*). The disciple drank water touched by the toe of the Guru who imparted the *gurmantra*. As the community grew in numbers, local *sangat* leaders in different parts administered *charan pahul*. One more practice is said to have originated in the time of Guru Arjan of placing water under the wooden seat (*manji*) of the Guru Granth Sahib and then using it as *amrit* to initiate the neophytes. While inaugurating the Khalsa in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh substituted

khande di pahul or *amrit* for *charan pahul*. At that ceremony, the neophytes quaffed five palmsful of sweetened water churned in a steel vessel with a *khanda*, double-edged sword, to the chanting of the holy hymns. In response to the Guru's call, each of them shouted *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa*, *Vahiguru ji ki Fateh*, every time he took a draught of the elixir. He thus imbibed the *gurmantra Vahiguru*. Initiating in this manner the first five Sikhs known as *panj piare*, the Five Beloved, Guru Gobind Singh had himself initiated by them with the same rites. Since then any five Sikhs reputed for their religious devotion can initiate the neophytes and administer to them the *gurmantra*. Constant repetition of *Vahiguru* with full concentration, withdrawing one's mind from the world of the senses, is practising the Sikh spiritual discipline of *nam* so reverberatingly inculcated by the Gurus in the Holy Book.

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T. S.

GURMAT (**Wazir Singh**) (*gur-mat, mat*, Sanskrit *mati*, i.e. counsel or tenets of the Guru, more specifically the religious principles laid down by the Guru) is a term which may in its essential sense be taken to be synonymous with Sikhism itself. It covers doctrinal, prescriptive and directional aspects of Sikh faith and praxis. Besides the basic theological structure, doctrine and tenets derived from the teachings of Guru Nanak and his nine successors, it refers to the whole Sikh way of life both in its individual and social expressions evolved over the centuries. Guidance received by Sikhs in their day-to-day affairs from institutions established by the Gurus and by the community nurtured upon their teachings will also fall within the frame of *gurmat*. In any exigency, the decision to be taken by the followers must conform to *gurmat* in its ideological and/or conventional assumptions.

The 'guru' in *gur-mat* means the Ten Gurus of the Sikh faith as well as *gur-bani*, i.e. their inspired utterances recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib. The instruction (*mat*) of the Guru implies the teaching imparted through this holy word, and the example set by the Ten Gurus in person. Direction derived from these sources is a Sikh's ultimate norm in shaping the course of his life, both in its sacred and secular aspects. The spiritual path he is called upon to pursue should be oriented towards obtaining release, i.e. freedom from the dread bondage of repeated births and deaths, and standards of religious and personal conduct he must conform to in order to relate to his community and to society as a whole are all collectively subsumed in the concept of *gurmat*.

Theologically, *gurmat* encompasses a strictly monotheistic belief. Faith in the Transcendent Being as the Supreme, indivisible reality without attributes is the first principle. The attributive-immanent nature of the Supreme Being is also accepted in

Sikhism which posits power to create as one of the cardinal attributes of the Absolute or God of its conception. The Creator brought into being the universe by his *hukam* or Will, without any intermediaries. Man, as the pinnacle of creation, is born with a divine spark; his liberation lies in the recognition of his own spiritual essence and immanence of the Divine in the cosmic order. Fulfilment comes with the curbing of one's *haumai* or ego and cultivation of the discipline of *nam*, i.e. absorption in God's name, and of the humanitarian values of *seva*, selfless service to fellow men, love and tolerance.

The way of life prescribed by *gurmat* postulates faith in the teachings of *gurbani*, perception of the Divine Will as the supreme law and honest performance of one's duties as a householder, an essential obligation. The first act suggested is prayer—prayer in the form of recitation by the individual of *gurbani*, thus participation in corporate service, or silent contemplation on the holy Word in one's solitude. *Kirat karni, vand chhakna te nam japna* is the formula which succinctly sums up what is required of a Sikh: he must work to earn his living, share with others the fruit of his exertion, and practise remembrance of God's Name. *Gurmat* has evolved a tradition of observances and ceremonies for the Sikhs, mostly centred around the Holy Book, Guru Granth Sahib. *Gurmat* recognizes no priestly class as such. Any of the Sikhs admitted to the *sangat* may lead any of the services. He may lead prayers, perform the wedding ceremony known as Anand Karaj, and recite from the Guru Granth Sahib. The rites of passage, viz. ceremonies connected with the birth of a child, initiation, marriage and death, all take place in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. They conclude with an *ardas* and the distribution of sacramental *karahprasad*. The recital of six stanzas from the *Anand* (lit.

bliss) is well-nigh mandatory for all occasions, whether of joy or sorrow, wedding or death.

On the ethical plane, *gurmat* prescribes a code of duties and moral virtues, coupled with the distinctive appearance made obligatory for the Khalsa. A Sikh becomes a full member of the Khalsa brotherhood after he has received the rites of initiation and the vows that go with it. Violation of any part of the code (particularly the four prohibitions) of the Kalsa is treated as disregard of *gurmat* and renders the offender guilty of apostasy. The tribunal of Sri Akal Takht at Amritsar has traditionally been regarded as Supreme in religious, social and secular affairs of the Sikhs and has the authority to issue edicts for providing guidance to the Panth as a whole and to excommunicate any individual who has acted contrary to its interests or who has been found guilty of attempting to overturn any established Sikh religious convention.

Directional injunctions under *gurmat* can be issued to individuals or communities by Panj Piare, the five elect ones. They will provide solution to problems that arise or problems brought before them. Or, one 'consults' the Guru by presenting oneself before the Guru Granth Sahib to obtain in moments of perplexity his (the Guru's) guidance which comes in the form of the *sabda*, i.e. hymn or stanza, that first meets the eye at the top of left-hand page as the Holy Book is opened at random. There are instances also of the community leaders deciding on a course of action through recourse to such consultation. The institution of *gurmata* (sacred resolution), unanimous decision taken or consensus arrived at in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, dates back to the early eighteenth century.

Some of the conventions and customs established to resolve lingering controversies have become part of *gurmat*. In regard to the wedding ceremony for instance, the custom of *anand karaj* has gained universal acceptance which was not the case until the beginning of the twentieth century: any other form of the ritual will not have the sanction of *gurmat* today. As regards meat-eating, *gurmat* has not given a final verdict, both vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism being concurrently prevalent. The use of intoxicants is, however, clearly prohibited. Casteism and untouchability are ruled out in principle; any vestiges of it such as use of caste-names as surnames are generally considered against *gurmat*. The 48-hour- long uninterrupted recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib, called *akhand path*, has over the decades come to be accepted as part of the Sikh way of life.

Gurmat does not approve of renunciation. It insists, on the other hand, on active participation in life. Human existence, according to Sikh belief, affords one a rare opportunity for self-transcendence through cognizing and contemplating on the Name and through deeds of selfless service. One rehearses the qualities of humility, compassion and fraternal love best while living in the world. A householder who works to earn his living and is yet willing to share with others the fruit of his exertion and who cherishes ever God in his heart is, according to *gurmat*, the ideal man. Even as reverence for the pious and the saintly is regarded desirable, parasitism is forbidden in *gurmat*. The cultivation of the values of character and of finer tastes in life is commended.

The writings of the Gurus preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib and the Dasam Granth best interpret and elucidate what *gurmat* is. Some anecdotes recorded in the Janam Sakhis also help explain *gurmat* principles. A systematic exposition of *gurmat*

principles was for the first time undertaken by Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636), who in his *Varan* expatiated upon terms such as *gurmukh*, one attuned to the Gurus' teaching, *sangat*, fellowship of the holy, and *seva*, humble acts of service in the cause of the community and of fellow men in general, besides evolving a framework for the exegetics of *gurbani*. The process of exposition, continued by men of learning such as Baba Miharban (1581-1640), Bhai Mani Singh (d.1737) and Bhai Santokh Singh (1787-1843) and by the writers of Rahitnama literature reached its culmination in the Singh Sabha movement which produced interpreters of the calibre of Bhai Kahn Singh (1861-1938), Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957) and Bhai Jodh Singh (1882 1981).

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W. S.

GURMATA (**K. S. Thapar**), a *mata*, i.e. counsel or resolution adopted by the Sikhs at an assembly of theirs held in the name of the Guru concerning any religious, social or political issue. The convention grew in the turbulent eighteenth century to determine the consensus of the community on matters affecting its solidarity and survival. In those uncertain days, Sikhs assembled at the Akal Takht at Amritsar on Baisakhi and Divali days and took counsel together, in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, to plan a course of action in face of an immanent danger or in pursuit of a common objective. The final decision emerging from the deliberations was the *gurmata*. It represented the general will of the Kalsa and it carried the sanction of the Guru, the assembly having acted by the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib.

The genesis of the *gurmata* is traceable to the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and the earliest instances in fact go back to his own time. While inaugurating the Khalsa in 1699, the Guru said that all members of the Panth, the Sikh commonwealth, were equal, he (the Guru) being one of them; all previous divisions of caste and status had been obliterated.

Before he passed away in 1708, he declared that wherever Sikhs were gathered in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, there was the Guru himself present and that the counsel thus taken represented the combined will of the Kalsa.

There are at least two instances occurring in the lifetime of Guru Gobind Singh when he let the 'general will' of the Khalsa prevail, perhaps against his own judgement. One such instance was the evacuation of Anandpur (1705). Sorely pressed for want of food and ammunition, the besieged Sikhs decided to accept the promises of safe conduct given by the besieging force in return for withdrawal from the Fort. The Guru was not

convinced of the genuineness of the besiegers' word, yet he yielded to the will of the Khalsa expressed in council in his own presence. In the battle of Chamkaur, following the evacuation of Anandpur, most of the Sikhs in train as well as two of the Guru's sons fell fighting against the pursuing host. The few surviving Sikhs suggested to the Guru to leave the fortress, to which he was not agreeable. They then expressed their joint will in the name of the Khalsa calling upon the Guru to escape. This was a *gurmata* in its nascent form. The Guru had no option but to 'obey'.

Gurmata had emerged as a well-established democratic institution towards the middle of the eighteenth century. European travellers such as George Forster (*A Journey from Bengal to England*) and John Malcolm (Sketch *of the Sikhs*), both of whom visited the Punjab, the former in 1783 and the latter in 1805, have left vivid accounts of the functioning of the *gurmata*. According to these accounts, Sikhs gathered twice a year, on the occasions of Baisakhi and Divai, at Akal Takht to take stock of the political situation, to devise ways and means to meet the common danger, to choose men to lead them in battle, and so on. The procedure was democratic. All those who attended these assemblies of the Sarbatt Khalsa, the entire Sikh people, had an equal say in the deliberations. "All private animosities ceased" and everyone present "sacrificed his personal feeling at the shrine of general good." Everyone was actuated by "principles of pure patriotism" and considered nothing but "the interest of the religion and the commonwealth" to which he belonged. After the *gurmata* was passed, everyone, irrespective of whether he had spoken for or against it when it was debated considered it his religious duty to abide by it. The assembly met in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and the *Dasam Granth*. Inaugural *ardasa* (supplication) was said by one of those present

seeking the Guru's blessing, sacramental *karahprasad* was distributed and proposals were put forth for discussion. *Ardasa*, continues John Malcolm, was again recited and all those present vowed, with the Guru Granth Sahib betwixt them, to lay aside all internal disputes and discords. "This moment of religious fervour and ardent patriotism" was utilized to reconcile all animosities. Proposals were then considered and an agreed *gurmata* evolved, the whole assembly raising shouts of *sat sri akal* together in token of acceptance.

To cite some of the historic *gurmatas*, Sikhs resolved by mutual counsel at a general assembly at Amritsar in 1726 to avenge the slaying of Tara Singh of Van and his companions and rise to obstruct the functioning of the government. They attacked treasuries and arsenals and chastised the officials who had been spying on them. When in 1733 an offer of a *jagir* and title of Nawab was received from the Mughal governor of Lahore, Sikhs by one voice chose Kapur Singh for the honour. Though there was no formal *gurmata* adopted, the consensus was arrived at in a *divan* in keeping with the same spirit and procedure. A Sikh conclave took place at Amritsar on *Divali* (14 October) of 1745 to take stock of the situation following the death of the governor of Lahore, Zakariya Khan, who had launched large-scale persecution, and adopted a *gurmata* extending sanction to the 25 Sikh groups which had emerged and permitting them to carry out raids on Mughal strongholds. The assembly held on the Baisakhi day (30 March) of 1747 resolved by a *gurmata* passed to erect at Amritsar a fort which came to be known as Ram Rauni.

By a *gurmata* passed in 1748 (Baisakhi, 29 March), Sikhs decided to establish the Dal Khalsa, choosing Jassa Singh Ahluvalia as the leader and reducing the number of

recognized *jathas* to 11 (the number having gone up to 65 by then) and providing for a record being kept at the Akal Takht of the possessions of each group in a separate file (*misl*). A *gurmata* in 1753 formally endorsed the system of Rakhi introduced by the ruling Sikh clans. In 1765, a *gurmata* was passed proclaiming the supremacy of the Sarbatt Khalsa over individual leaders. Through another *gurmata* the same year, a coin was struck with the inscription, *Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be dirang, yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh* (prosperity, power and unfailing victory received from Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh), and on the reverse, "Struck at Lahore, the seat of government, in the auspicious *samvat* 1822 (AD 1765).

To challenge Ahmad Shah Durrani returning from Sirhind to Lahore at the time of his seventh invasion of India (1764-65), the Sikhs made a *gurmata*. "All the Sikhs," records Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, "assembled in a *divan*. Sitting in one place, they adopted a *gurmata* that they must now confront the Shah and match arms with him. Every second day, they say, he comes and harasses us. Without fighting him now, we shall obtain no peace. He who survives will be spared this daily suffering; he who dies attains realms divine."

Conquests up to 1767 were made by the *misls* in the name of the Khalsa, but, with personal ambition and aggrandizement gaining the upper hand over the years, the sense of a corporate Sikh commonwealth gradually wore away. In the days of Sikh rule, the institution of *gurmata* fell into desuetude. The last semblance of a *gurmata* was an assembly of Sikh *sardars* called by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1805 to discuss the situation arising from the entry into Sikh dominions of the fugitive Maratha chief, Jasvant Rao Holkar, followed by British troops under Lord Lake. The word *gurmata* was resurrected

after the lapse of Sikh sovereignty, especially with the rise of the Singh Sabha movement in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. *Gurmata* then referred to any decision on a matter of religious or social import arrived at by common consent at a Sikh assembly in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. The Akali movement brought within its orbit political issues as well. The word *gurmata* is now in everyday use for a resolution adopted at a Sikh religious *divan* or political conference.

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K. S. T.

GURMAT SANGIT (**M. J. Curtiss**) (Sabda kirtan) has been an integral part of Sikh worship from the very beginning. Hymn-singing was in fact the earliest form of devotion for the Sikhs. Even in the time of Guru Nanak, the disciples assembled together to the *shabads*, i.e. hymns composed by the Guru and thus to render praise to the Lord. *Kirtan* has since been appropriated into the regular *gurdwara* service. But Sikh *kirtan* eschews all expression of abandon or frenzy in the form of clapping and dancing. Laudation is proffered to the Supreme Being who is without form, *nirankar* or *nirakar*, and not to a deity in any embodiment or incarnation. The texts of the *shabad kirtan* are those that comprise the Holy Book of Sikhs known as the Guru Granth Sahib, or Adi Granth, compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604. Probably no other religion shows a closer relationship between music and its scriptures than does Sikhism. The Holy Book is organized according to *ragas*, 31 in number, to which the poetic hymns belong. The total number of hymns is 5,694 with 4,857 (the author's figures) contributed by six of the ten Gurus and 837 by Hindu *bhaktas*, Sikh devotees and Sufi saints. Under each *raga* the hymns of the Gurus are recorded first and are arranged in the order of *chaupadas* and *dupadas* (hymns of 4 and 2 verses, respectively), *astapadis* (hymns of 8 verses), longer poems organized around a motif, and *chhants*—hymns of four or six verses, lyrical in character, *vars* on the pattern of ballads consisting of *pauris*, each *pauri* preceded by two or more *slokas*, and hymns by *bhaktas* and other devotees similarly arranged.

The Gurus were highly knowledgeable of music and well-versed in the classical style. Guru Nanak kept with him as constant companion a Muslim musician, Mardana, who played the *rabab* or rebeck. Guru Nanak wished his hymns to be sung to *ragas* that express the spirit of the text and performance style to be compatible with the meaning of

the hymn. The succeeding Gurus followed his example. The *ragas* named in the Holy Book were selected probably because of their suitability for expressing the ideals represented in the texts for which they were to be used. Over the centuries *raga* names and the exact pitch of the tones may have varied. Lack of a precise national system for Indian music indicates that the preservation of *ragas* has been dependent upon oral tradition.

Raga variants are those melodies to which a *ragi* or *rababi*, i.e. musician, may move when beginning a new line of text or when inserting explanatory material. Over the centuries more *raga* variants have been approved than the few given in the Guru Granth Sahib. *Raga* variants have some points in common with the main *raga* but sufficiently different to set off the textual material musically, thus keeping the many verses from becoming musically monotonous. For example, the Gauri group offers many possibilities. A main *raga* from another section of the Holy Book may also be used as a variant. *Talas* are left to the discretion of the performer and are usually those of the classical system although regional ones may be used for the lighter forms. *Vars* (*slokas* and *pauris*) may be set to authorized folk tunes, some selected by the Gurus themselves, and treated in light classical style. A *var* is not counted as one unit but according to the number of *slokas*, *pauris* and couplets that are included in it.

At the conclusion of the Guru Granth Sahib is *Ragmala*, a classification of *ragas* listing 84 measures. The Holy Book contains only 31, eight of which are not given in this *Ragmala*. This circumstance can be interpreted to mean that the classification was not done primarily for the Guru Granth Sahib, but was included as it had existed. The purpose of classifying *ragas* according to a parent and its offspring, *raginis* and *putras*, is

to clarify and retain the individual character of each raga. Historically this has been the concern of music theorists rather than performing musicians. Since the basic notes of two or more *ragas* may be the same, the performance rules and the melodic material are the chief means of maintaining the proper mood and individual character. In the Guru Granth Sahib, a number of affirmations have been made about the virtue of the various *ragas* to induce piety and devotion. The majority of these are from Guru Amar Das, third in Guru Nanak's line, but the other Gurus too have set forth their experience about the *ragas* as aids to spiritual experience. About *kirtan* (music directed to the expression of devotion) it has been said: *kirtanu nirmolak hira anand guni gahira—kirtan* is an invaluable jewel, bringing bliss, treasure of noble qualities (GG, 893). Guru Arjan says about the beauty and harmony of music to induce the mood of devotion: *dhanu su rag surangare alapat sabh tikh jai*—which are blessed as the beautiful musical measures when performed all desire then ends (GG, 958).

Guru Nanak, warning the mind against voluptuous indulgence in music such as had been current in India particularly among the upper classes, says:

git raga ghan tal si kure,

trihu-guna upjai binasai dure;

duji durmati dardu na jai,

chhutai gurmakhi daru guna ga

False are such songs, musical measures and reverberating accompaniments

As arouse the Three Qualities and, destroying devotion, draw the self away from God.

By duality and evil thinking is suffering not removed:

Liberation by the Master's guidance comes.

Chanting Divine laudations is the true remedy for life's ills (GG, 832).

Guru Nanak (in Raga Asa) on the ecstasy devotional music evokes:

rag ratan paria parvar;

tisu vichi upjai amritu sar;

nanak karte ka ihu dhanu malu

je ko bujhai ehu bicharu.

The jewel music, born of the fairy family,

Is source of the essence of *amrita*;

This wealth to the Creator belongs—

Few are there this to realize. (GG, 351)

The musical directions given in the text of the Guru Granth Sahib are detailed so as to guide the composer and performer to adhere to the proper classical tradition in music. On page 838, at the opening of the composition bearing the title *Thitin* (the dates) in the measure Bilaval, the musical direction is *ghar* 10, jati. This refers to the particular score in which the music is composed as also to the rhythm on the *tabla* or drum.

Guru Amar Das, whose attachment to music and its modes is deep and ecstatic, has set down his impressions of some of the musical measures in which he has composed his *bani*.

On Siri Raga:

raga vichi sri ragu hai je sachi dhare piaru;

sada hari sachu mani vasai nihchal mati aparu.

Sri Raga is to be reckoned superior to the other *ragas* only if it induces love for holy Truth, whereby the holy Lord should in the self be lodged, and the mind find poise. (GG, 83).

On Gauri believed to be a female Ragini:

gauri ragi sulakhani je khasmai chiti karei;

bhanai chalai Satiguru. kai aisa sigaru karei. . .

The Raga Gauri is reckoned noble,

should she in the Lord fix the self;

Induce obedience to the Divine Will

Which is the best make-up. (GG, 311)

Suhi (lit. vermilion) is woven into a figure (GG, 785). Not the flashy vermilion dye, symbolical of voluptuous pleasures but the fast red of madder (majith) symbolizing constancy in devotion is commanded.

Bilaval, in *Bilaval ki Var* (GG, 849-55), is mentioned to express constancy of devotion, twice by Guru Amar Das and twice by Guru Ram Das. Bilaval is the *raga* expressive of joy. True joy, however, comes not from melody but from the holy Name of God. Says Guru Amar Das:

bilavalu tab hi kijiai jab mukhi hovai namu;

raga nada sabadi sohane ja lagai sahaji dhianu.

raga nada chhodi Hari sevai ta dargah paiai manu;

nanak gurmukhi brahmu bichariai chukai mani abhimanu.

True joy comes only by utterance of the holy name;

Music, melody and the words acquire beauty from the mind in poise fixed.

Leave aside music, melody and words; serve the Lord; thereby may ye be honoured at the Divine Portal.

Saith Nanak: By contemplation of the Supreme Being through the Master's guidance is egoism from the mind banished. (GG, 849)

On the same page occurs another *sloka*:

bilavalu karihu tum piariho ekasu siu liv lae. . .

Ye loved ones, in devotion to the Sole Supreme Being, find you joy;

Thus will your suffering of transmigration be annulled, and in Truth shall ye be absorbed.

Ever shall ye live in joy (*bilaval*) and bliss, should you obey the holy Preceptor's will. . . (GG, 849)

Guru Ram Das, earlier on the same page, at the opening of this *Var*, thus expresses the joy of Bilaval, the word itself implying "joy".

hari utamu hari prabhu gavia kari nadu bilavalu ragu;

upadesu guru suni mannia dhuri mastaki pura bhagu. . .

The Lord exalted, Supreme Master have I lauded in the tune of Bilaval;

The Master's teaching have I followed, by Supreme good luck ordained in Primal Time.

Day and night have I ever uttered the Lord's praise with devotion for Him in my heart lodged.

My mind and body, in bloom, are like a garden fresh.

By the lamp of Enlightenment by the Master lit,

The gloom of ignorance is lifted.

Nanak, servant of God, finds life from beholding the Lord's face, even though it be for a short hour. (GG, 849)

Thus Guru Amar Das on Ramkali:

ramkali ramu mani vasia ta bania sigaru. . .

In chanting Ramkali as the Lord in the self is lodged, that is the truest self-decoration;

As through the Master's land is abloom the lotus of the heart,

On the seeker is bestowed the treasure of devotion.

With illusion gone is the self awakened,

And gloom of ignorance lifted.

She alone has true beauty that with the Lord is in love;

A woman of good repute, everlasting bliss has she with the beloved.

Egoists know not of the true make-up,

Their life is all lost.

One that has the make-up of other than devotion,

In transmigration remains caught. (GG, 950)

On Sorathi, the same vision is expressed by Guru Nanak and Guru Ram Das. Guru Nanak in the opening *sloka* of *Ragu Sorathi Var* M. IV *Ki:*

sorathi sada suhavani je sacha mani hoi. . .

Sorathi is pleasing should it bring to mind the holy Lord. It is pleasing, should teeth not be fouled by food unjustly obtained.

And on the tongue should run the Lord's holy Name. (GG, 642)

Guru Ram Das in the same *Var* (the same page):

sorathi tami suhavani ja hari namu dhandhole. . .

Sorathi is pleasing should she go out in quest of the Lord's name

The Master, exalted being, should she propitiate,

And by wisdom granted by the Master, the Name Divine utter;

Day and night should she with Divine love be surcharged.

And dyed in God, her vest

In the dye of God should she dip. (GG, 642)

Guru Amar Das thus expresses himself on the measure Kedara:

kedara raga vichi janiai bhai sabde kare piaru. . .

Brother! Consider Kedara exalted among the *ragas*,

Should one chanting it be in love with the holy Word,

Should join holy company, and to the holy Lord be devoted;

Casting off one's own impurity, may save one's whole clan;

Should garner the wealth of noble attributes, and cast off evil qualities.

Saith Nanak: Truly united is he who turns not away from the Master,

And forms not devotion to another. (GG, 1087)

Maru *raga*, whose name comes from *marusthal* (dry land), is thus celebrated by Guru Amar Das:

maru te sitalu kare manurahu kanchanu hoi. . .

The burning hot desert He turns to coolness;

Rusted iron he turns into gold;

Praised be the Holy Lord, Supreme over all. (GG, 994)

Malar, the *raga* associated with the rainy season and joys of romantic love, is thus transmuted into a spiritual experience by Guru Amar Das.

malaru sital ragu hai hari dhiaiai santi hoi. . .

Malar's music is cooling; true peace comes from meditation on the Lord. (GG, 1283)

Below is given a detailed statement of the functions and atmosphere ascribed traditionally to the various *ragas*, along with the *banis* composed to each, within the corpus of the Guru Granth Sahib. In this statement the *bhaktas* and other devotees using them are not mentioned. Only the Gurus are included.

1. ***SIRI*** (*Shri*)

Raga Sri was favoured by the Hindus for religious occasions and is found in many of the old treatises. In the *Ragmala* listed as a parent *raga*, it currently is a member of the *purvi thata*. Still a popular concert *raga* today, it is considered one of the most famous from among the North Indian classical system. Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan composed to this *raga*. Traditionally performed at sunset, it is assigned to the rainy season as well as the months of November and December. Its mood is one of majesty combined with prayerful meditation. This *raga* is always referred to as "*Siri Raga*" rather than placing the term *raga* before the name. It accompanies about 142 *sabdas*.

Aroh: Sa Re M'a, Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha, Pa M'a Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Sa, Re Re Pa, Pa M'a Ga Re, Re Re, Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

2. ***MAJH***

This raga is attributed to Guru Nanak, who developed it from a Punjabi folk tune. It does not appear in the *Ragmala* nor does it seem to be a classical *raga* today. Possibly it has been reserved purely for *gurbani sangit*. Majh was the setting for compositions by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. No information about this *raga* is available from English sources. The reader is referred to a Punjabi text *Gurmat Sangit* by Bhai Vir Singh, published by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi: Sa

3. **GAURI**

Gauri is one of several Gauri *ragas* and appears in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Siri Raga. This is an evening *raga* assigned to autumn and its mood is contemplative. The composition in Gauri is very voluminous. Gauri was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Several forms of Gauri exist historically and this probably accounts for the large number of variants: Gauri Cheti, Gauri Bairagan, Gauri Dipaki, Gauri Purbi-Dipaki, Gauri Guareri, Gauri-Majh, Gauri Malava, Gauri Mala, Gauri Sorath, Gauri Dakhani.

Aroh: Sa <u>Re</u> Ga <u>Re</u> Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni <u>Dha</u> Ma Pa, <u>Dha</u> Pa Ma Ga, Ga <u>Re</u> Sa Ni Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

Occasionally Re is performed with a vibrate as in Siri Raga which has the same *vadis*. *Ni* is given prominence through either stopping or lingering on this note.

4. **ASA**

Asa is a very old *raga*, once popular in the Punjab but seldom heard in concerts today. In the *Ragmala* this is a *ragini* of *raga Megha*. However, today it is assigned to the Bilaval *thata*. Asa is a devotional *raga* for the cold season and is performed in the early morning just before sunrise. However, it is also known as a twilight melody with a calm mystical mood. Asa was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi: Sa

Asa is a crooked (*vakra*) *raga* in that approaches to certain notes have to be made from a set position. Its variants as given in the Holy Book are Kafi and Asavari, both of which have many features in common with Asa. This *raga* may have originated in Maharashtra about the time of the major Muslim invasions. Its pleasing sound made it suitable for *bhajans* by the Hindu devotees.

5. **GUJARI**

The name "Gujari" probably refers to the state of Gujarat. This *raga* was in existence at the time of Raja Man Singh of Gwalior (1486-1517) who lived at a time of

high musical achievement and referred to this *raga* in his writings about music. Gujari is rarely used as a concert *raga* today and little is known about its form. In modern times it has been supplanted by Gujari-Todi. In the *Ragmala*, Gujari is listed as a ragini of Raga Dipak. Today Gujari-Todi belongs to the Todi *thata*. Gujari-Todi may be performed during any season of the year and is assigned to the early morning hours. It produces a mood of thoughtfulness that reaches deep into the heart. Texts set to this *raga* strip away all subterfuge and make man see himself as he is and search within for the truth. While not one of the most frequently used *ragas*, Gujari was the setting for compositions by Guru Nanak, Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga M'a Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha M'a Ga Re, Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Sa Dha, Ma, Dha Ni Sa, Ni Dha M'a Ga, Re, Ga Re Sa

Savar: Re Ga Dha M'a

Vadi: Dha

Samvadi: Re

6. ***DEVAGANDHARI***

Today Devagandhari is a rare, little known, ancient *raga*. Its performance time is the morning hours. Historically it has had three forms; the less ornamented type is described here. In the *Ragmala*, Devagandhari is a *ragini* of Malkaunsa. Today it belongs to the Asavari *thata*. Its mood is one of prayerful supplication presenting a heroic effect. The texts set to this *raga* reveal a heroic search for these qualities which lead one to the Lord. This *raga* was used primarily by Guru Arjan. Forty-Seven hymns were composed to it including three by Guru Tegh Bahadur and six by Guru Ram Das.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, Ma Pa, Dha Ni Dha Pa, Ma Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Dha Ni Dha Pa, Ma Ga, Sa Re Ma, Ga Sa Re Ga Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi: Sa

7. ***BIHAGARA***

Bihagara is very similar to the modern and very popular *raga* Bihag. The resemblance is so close that many performers have trouble maintaining the significance of each. Bihagara is not given in the *Ragmala*. Today it is classified under the Bilaval *thata*. Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur set a total of 17 *sabdas*, *chhants* and *a var* to this *raga*. The performance time is between 9 p.m. and midnight, and the mood is devotional and tranquil. The texts composed to this *raga* describe the complete peace and response that come to man when he surrenders all to the Lord.

Aroh: Ni Sa Ga Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ni Dha Pa Dha Ga Ma Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi: Sa

8. ***VADAHANS***

Little has been written about this rare *raga*. It is not in the *Ragmala*, and today it is ascribed to the Kafi *thata*. Fifty-three *sabdas* plus numerous *slokas* represent the total number composed to this *raga* by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. *Vadahans* is considered suitable for the cold season and is assigned to the afternoon hours. Its mood is quiet and tender. Texts set to the *raga* explain how the Guru

alone can lead one to the Lord. Without the Lord one is likened to a woman without the love of her spouse.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa, Dha Ni Pa, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Pa, Dha Ma Ga Re, Sa Ni Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

9. ***SORATHI***

Raga Sorathi appears in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Raga Megha; today it belongs to the Khamaj *thata*. Besides Guru Nanak, Sorathi was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur for a total of 150 hymns plus numerous *slokas*. Sorathi belongs to the cold season and is performed in the first quarter of night. The mood is light and cheerful, with a pleasing sound resembling Raga Desh. The texts composed to this *raga* show how the words of the Guru can enlighten the mind. All fears vanish and one is filled with bliss.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Re Ni Dha, Ma Pa Dha Ma Ga Re Ni Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Dha

The melodies are characterized by sweeping phrases with glides connecting all leaps, even the shorter ones. Movement is moderately fast.

1 0. ***DHANASRI***

Raga Dhanasri appears in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Malkaunsa and currently is a member of the Kafi *thata*. It closely resembles Bhimpalasi in musical content but the

vadis and moods are different. Dhanasri is performed in the early afternoon and presents a cheerful, happy mood. It provided the setting for hymns by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur for a total of 101 hymns. These texts stress that man reaps what he sows. Only in the Lord may be found the riches that dispel fear and ignorance and thus cause man to realize his true self.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Pa Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Pa

Samvadi: Sa

Pa is given considerable emphasis and Ni and Pa receive sliding approaches, a characteristic of this *raga*. The pentatonic ascent provides some of the melodic features of this *raga*.

11. ***JAITSRI***

Jaitsri does not appear in the *Ragmala* nor is it found in the modern literature on the subject. Bhatkhande gives Jait-Kalyan but this is not to be confused with the above. However, Jaitsri does appear in a 17th century classification, but not in later ones. Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur composed 30 hymns, a *var* and several *slokas* to this *raga*. Today Raga Jait is found under the Marva *thata* and is assigned to the evening hours. A mood of gentle quietness and mystery pervades this *raga*. The texts describe the meditative thoughts of a devotee who has surrendered himself to his Guru and Lord. Raga Jait has two forms and the second includes some elements from Siri Raga and perhaps this is nearest the original Jaitsri.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Sa, Ga Pa M'a Dha Pa M'a Ga, M'a Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Ga

Samvadi: Ni

Because of the two different ways of singing this *raga*, melodic patterns are not fixed.

12. ***TODI***

A *ragini* of Dipak in the *Ragmala*, Todi is today the head of a thata. It is considered one of the most important of the north Indian ragas. Todi was used by the Gurus for 32 hymns. This is a raga for the late morning hours and the mood is gentle, with an aura of adoration. The texts composed to this raga emphasize that no matter what problems man meets or what worldly affairs distract the mind, devotion to the Lord brings one back to the path of release from worldliness.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga M'a Pa Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa M'a Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Dha Ni Sa, Re Ga, Re Sa, M'a Ga Pa M'a Ga, Re Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Dha

Samvadi: Re

13. ***BAIRARI***

This *raga* appears in the *Ragmala* as the first *ragini* of Siri Raga. In the *Mesakarna Ragmala* (1509), which is almost the same as that of the Guru Granth Sahib, the first *ragini* of Siri Raga is given as *Vairati*. However, modern sources do not give Bairari nor Vairati but Barari and Varari as well as Varati are listed. Kaufmann believes

that all of these names refer to the same *raga*, Barari. Whether this is the same as the old Bairari is open to question. The possibility always exists that Bairari was a regional tune. It was used by Guru Ram Das for six short hymns and by Guru Arjan for one. The performance time for Bairari is during the evening hours and it is currently assigned to the Marva *thata*. It resembles Purva Kalyan, the main difference being the use of *Pa* which is strong in Bairari and weak in Purva-Kalyan. Popley places Bairari in the same group as Siri Raga and this would agree with the *Ragmala*.

Aroh: Ni Re Ga Pa, M'a Ga, M'a Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha P'a, M'a Ga, Pa Ga, Re Sa

Vadi: Ga

Samvadi: Dha

14. ***TILANG***

Favoured by Muslims, this *raga* occurs in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Hindol. Today, it belongs to the Khamaj *thata*. Tilang was used by Guru Nanak (6 hymns), Guru Ram Das (3), Guru Arjan (5), Guru Tegh Bahadur (3), Kabir (1) and Namdev (2) for a total of 20 hymns. Tilang is performed at night and has a calm and pleasing mood. In the texts composed for this *raga*, the question is asked why man should cling to all the evils of this life when Guru Nanak has shown the way to true happiness and fulfilment.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Pa Ma Ga Sa

Vadi: Ga

Samvadi: Ni

15. ***SUHI***

Suhi is classified in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Megha. It was a favourite with Muslims and was considered proper for the hot season. Today this *raga* belongs to the Kah *thata* and its performance time is late morning. In the Holy Book one variant is given, Raga Suhi Lalit. Suhi was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan for 130 hymns, a *var* plus many *slokas*.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa, Ni Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, Ma Ga, Re Ga Re, Sa

Vadi: Pa

Samvadi: Sa

16. ***BILAVAL*** (ancient name Velavali)

Bilaval had become the basic scale for North Indian music by the early part of the 19th century. Its tonal relationships are comparable to the Western C - major scale. Bilaval appears in the *Ragmala* as a *ragini* of Bhairava, but today it is the head of the Bilaval *thata*. The *Ragmala* gives Bilaval as a *putra* (son) of Bhairav, but no relation between these two *ragas* is made today. Bilaval is a morning *raga* to be sung with a feeling of deep devotion and repose, often performed during the hot months. Over 170 hymns were composed to this *raga* by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga, Ma Pa, Dha, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha, Pa, Ma Ga, Re Sa

Pakar: Ga Re, Ga Ma Dha Pa, Ma Ga, Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Dha

Samvadi: Ga

17. ***GOND***

The *Ragmala* records Gaund and Gund as *putras* (sons) of Siri Raga, but does not give Gond. The possibility exists that Gond is a regional *raga* derived from that group of *ragas* with similar names and characterized by phrases from other *ragas* e.g. Bilaval, Kanara and Malar. Such names as Gaunda, Gand, Gounda, Gaundi, Goundgiri, and Gunda appear in classifications from the 11th to the 17th centuries. For those still known today (Gaudi, Goundgiri, and Goud) performance rules are obscure. Performance time is late afternoon or early evening and the mood is contemplative and dignified. Gond was used by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan (29 hymns). The texts beseech man to depend solely on the Lord for all benefits since it is He who has given him all his blessings.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga Ma, Pa Dha Ni Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Ni Dha Pa, Ma Ga, Re Sa

Pakar: Re Ga Ma, Pa Ma, Ma Pa Ni Dha Ni Dha Ni Sa, Ni Dha Ni Pa, Dha Ma

Vadi: Sa

Samvadi: Ma

6. ***RAMKALI***

Ramkali is not given in the *Ragmala* but is one of the most important *ragas* of the Guru Granth Sahib. All Gurus, including Guru Tegh Bahadur, have composed verses to this *raga*. The total number of *sabdas* comes to over three hundred. Ramkali is a morning *raga* performed after sunrise usually during the hot season. The mood is such as to inspire lofty thoughts. In the Guru Granth Sahib, a number of hymns in Ramkali expound True Yoga and other spiritual issues. Some celebrated compositions such as

Sidha Gosti, Anandu, *Sadd*, *Oankar* and the *Var* by Satta and Balvand are composed to this *raga*. Some of the verses also contain analogies to music and musical instruments. Four forms of this *raga* are recognized, although only two are in general use today. The *raga* belongs to the Bhairav *thata*.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, M'a Pa Dha Ni Dha Pa, Ga Ma Re Sa

Pakar: Dha Pa, Ma Pa, Dha Ni Dha Pa, Ga, Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Pa .

Samvadi: Re

19. ***NAT NARAIN***

In the *Ragmala*, Nat is given as *putra* (son) of Megha while today Nat Narain appears under the Bilaval *thata* and is assigned to the evening hours. This *raga* was used by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. Nat Narain is pictured as a warrior riding to battle. In the Holy Book, the fight against sin is never-ending but those who seek refuge in the Lord have their suffering removed.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Re, M'a Pa Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Dha Pa M'a Dha Pa, Ga Ma Re Sa

Pakar: Sa Ma Ga Ma Pa, Dha Pa, Ma, Ga Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Sa

Samvadi: Re

20. ***MALI GAURA***

Gaura is listed in the *Ragmala* as a *putra* (son) of Dipak, but not Mali Gaura. Currently classified under the Marva *thata*. Mali Gaura is performed in the evening at

sunset. In recent years it is rarely heard in concert. Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan composed to this *raga* 14 hymns included in the Holy Book.

Aroh: Sa Re Sa Ni Dha Sa Re Ga M'a Pa, Dha Ni Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, M'a Ni Dha M'a Ga, Re Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

21. ***MARU***

Maru is an old *raga* seldom heard in concerts today. Some theorists equate it with Maruva or Marva. In the *Ragmala*, Maru is a *putra* (son) of Malkaunsa. It is found in other classifications from the 14th to the early l9th century. Maru was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur for 144 hymns, two *vars* plus a large number of *slokas*. One of its variations is Maru Kafi. Maru is assigned to the hours of sunset and is considered suitable for the cold season. The mood is quiet and contemplative. The tonal material given here is for Maru Bihag, Bilaval *thata*.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Pa, Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, M'a Pa Dha Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Pa Dha Ni Dha Pa Ma Pa Ma Ga, Pa Dha Pa Ga Re, Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Pa

Samvadi: Ni

22. ***TUKHARI***

Tukhari was probably based on a folk tune and was very likely developed by Guru Nanak into a *raga* for the singing of certain *sabdas*. No *raga* of this name appears

in the classifications of the period when *sabdas* were being composed and the Holy Book compiled. A *raga* called Mukhari may be found in the classifications of Karnataka (South Indian) *ragas* during the period from the 15th to the l8th centuries. Tukhari was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. Guru Nanak's composition *Bara Maha* is set to this Raga. It appears to be a *raga* for the morning hours to be sung in winter. Its name Tukhari is the popular form of *tushar* (Sanskrit for winter frost). No melodic material for the Tukhari is available but, for the sake of comparison, the scale of Mukhari is given:

Aroh: Ni Sa, Ga Ma Pa, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, Ni Dha Pa, M'a Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Ni Ni Dha Pa, Ma Pa, Ma Ga, Re Sa

Vadi: Pa

Samvadi Sa

23. ***KEDARA***

Kedara is an old *raga* dating from Guru Nanak's time or even earlier which has become a very important and popular North Indian *raga* today. It is supposed to possess magical qualities, if correctly performed, which can heal the sick. In the *Ragmala*, Kedara is a *putra* (son) of Megha but currently is in the Kalyan *thata*. Kedara was used by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan for a few short hymns. Several forms of Kedara have been and still are in use. Thus considerable freedom of choice may be exercised by the performer as to how this *raga* be performed in association with a given text. In the most commonly used form, Kedara is performed during the first quarter of the night and is particularly auspicious when the moon is visible, a planet with which it has long been

associated. The mood is one of contemplation associated with a sort of ascetic idealism. The sadness expressed in *Ragmala* paintings suggests the longing of man for the Supreme Being when this *raga* accompanies a *sabda*. The Kedara scale is *vakra* (crooked) with unusual intervals:

Aroh: Sa Ma, Ma Pa, Dha Pa, Ni Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, M'a Pa Dha Pa Ma, Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi: Sa

24. ***BHAIRON***

Bhairon was an important *raga* at the time of Guru Nanak and has continued to retain its significance and popularity. Bhairon (not to be confused with Bhairavi) appears in the *Ragmala* as husband of Bhairavi and four other *raginis*. Today it is the head *raga* for one of the ten *thatas*. The *Raga Sagara*, a treatise of circa 8th century, describes this *raga* as awe-inspiring and as expressing the "fulfilment of the desire of worship." Mesakarna (1509) calls this morning melody of the autumn season one of awesome grandeur. Performed before sunrise, this *raga* was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan for 99 hymns.

Aroh: Sa <u>Re</u>, Ga Ma Pa <u>Dha</u>, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni, <u>Dha</u> <u>Dha</u> Pa, Ma Ga, <u>Re</u> <u>Re</u> Sa

Vadi: Dha

Samvadi: Re

The *vadis* are performed with a slow, wide vibrato which may begin with the *vadi* itself or the highest limit to which it will extend. In descent the vibrato must begin with upper limit. Otherwise Bhairon has few characteristic phrases.

25. ***BASANT***

The name Basant is from Sanskrit *vasant* meaning spring, and during that season of the year Basant may be performed at any time of the day or night. Otherwise, it is reserved for the night between 9 p.m. and midnight. The *Ragmala* gives Basant as a *putra* (son) of Hindol, also a spring *raga*. Today it belongs to the Purvi *thata*. The only variant noted in the Holy Book is Basant-Hindol. Basant is a very old *raga* dating from the 8th century. Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur composed *sabdas* to this *raga*. Performed in slow tempo, this gentle melody depicts quiet joy. The descending scale is usually found at the beginning of a composition with the ascending form following later.

Aroh: Sa Ga Ma Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma, Ga Re Sa

Vadi: Sa

Samvadi: Ma

26. **SARANG**

Sarang is reputed to have acquired its name from the famous 14th century music theorist, Sarangadeva. The Sarang *raga* consists of a group of seven, each of which is combined with some other *raga*. Today when Sarang is given as the *raga*, it usually means Brindavani-Saranga, a member of the Kafi *thata*. Performed during the midday period, its mood is quiet and peaceful. In the *Ragmala*, Sarang is listed as a *putra* (son)

of Siri Raga. Sarang is an important *raga* in the Guru Granth Sahib and was used extensively by Guru Arjan. However, Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Tegh Bahadur also composed *sabdas* to this *raga* and Guru Angad used it for some *slokas*.

Aroh: Sa Re Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Pa Ma Re, Sa

Pakar: Ni Sa Re, Ma Re, Pa Ma Re, Ni Sa

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

27. **MALAR (MALLAR** or **MALHAR)**

Malar is one of the rainy-season *ragas* performed from June to September. During the monsoons, Malar can be sung at any time of the day or night; otherwise, it is designated for late evening or early morning. Its mood is joyful because the rains cause the crops to grow and the flowers to bloom. Malar is frequently combined with other *ragas*, particularly Megha. Tansen added some changes to Malhar and this *raga* is known as Mian ki Malhar. In the *Ragmala*, Gaund-Malar is described as a *ragini* of Megha and is the only one with a Malhar name. Today the Malhar *ragas* are assigned to the Kafi *thata*. A favourite of Hindu musicians, Malhar was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan. The pure Malhar is seldom performed today, and it might be heard in one of its combinations.

Aroh: Sa, Re Ga Ma, Ma Re Pa, Ni Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa, Dha Ni Pa, Ma Ga Ma, Re Sa

Pakar: Sa Re Ga Ma, Ma Re Pa, Dha Ni Pa, Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Ma

Samvadi Sa

28. **KANARA** (Kanada)

The modern name for this *raga* appears to be "Kanada", probably a matter of transliteration from its original name. Under the Kanara spelling this *raga* was prevalent in the classifications of 16th and 17th centuries. However, in one instance, Kanara and Kanada both appear in the same *ragmala*. This would indicate that at one time these were two distinctly different *ragas*. Kanara was used by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan for 69 hymns, a *var* plus numerous *slokas*. In the *Ragmala*, Kanara is a *putra* of Dipak. The modern Kanada is one of a group of many Kanada *ragas* which are combinations of Kanada with other *ragas*; one of the most popular is Darbari-Kanada classified under the Asavari *thata*. Assigned to the night hours, its mood is quiet and full of majesty. Darbari-Kanada is performed in slow tempo and is a popular concert form today. The details of this *raga*:

Aroh: Sa Re Ga, Ma Pa, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa, Ni Pa, Ma Pa, Ga Ma Re Sa

Vadi: Pa

Samvadi: Sa

29. ***KALIAN***

The Indian Sanskrit name for this *raga* is Kalyan and the Persian is Yuman. In the *Ragmala*, Kalian is the son of Dipak while today it is the head of the Kalian *thata*. It is performed during the first part of the night and is considered a blessing bringing all good into one's life. Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan composed 23 hymns to this *raga*. The

texts exalt the far-reaching and all-pervading power of the Lord. In the Holy Book the only *raga* variant given is Bhopali (Bhupali).

Aroh: Ni Re Ga, M'a Pa, Dha, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha, Pa, M'a Ga, Re Sa

Pakar: Ni Re Ga, Re Sa, Pa M'a Ga, Re Sa

Vadi; Ga

Samvadi: Ni

30. ***PRABHATI***

Prabhati does not appear in the *Ragmala*; the nearest to it in name is Prabal. Prabhati belongs to the Bhairav *thata* and is often combined with Raga Bhairav. Prabhati was the setting used for some 58 hymns by Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. This is a morning *raga* to be performed in a slow and dignified manner.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga Pa Dha Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Ni Pa Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Pa Pa Sa, Ni Dha Ni Pa, Pa Dha Ga Pa, Dha Pa Dha

Vadi: Sa

Samvadi: Pa

31. ***JAIJAVANTI***

Jaijavanti was used only by Guru Tegh Bahadur for four hymns. This *raga* does not appear in the Ragmala but was known as Javanta as early as the 14th century. Today it is regarded as an important *raga* belonging to the Khamaj *thata*. This majestic and highly arresting *raga* is assigned to the night hours.

Aroh: Sa, Re Ga Ma Pa, Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha Pa, Dha Ma, Re Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Re Ga Re Sa, Ni Dha Pa Re

Vadi: Re

Samvadi: Pa

Besides the *sabdas*, there are 22 *vars* or ballads in the Holy Book of the Sikhs which form a class by themselves. *Var*, a genre mainly of Punjabi origin, comprises a number of stanzas called *pauris*, sung by performing groups of three or four *dhadis* each to the accompaniment of *dhaddhs*, small two-faced drums held in one hand and played by the fingers of the other, and a *sarangi*. *Vars* in the Guru Granth Sahib also have two or more *slokas* preceding each *pauri*. The *slokas* are recited solo by the *dhadis* (or *ragis*) in turn while *pauris* are sung in unison by the group in traditional tunes of various folk ballads. To some of the *vars* Guru Arjan, who compiled the Holy Book, added directions with regard to the tunes in which they were to be sung.

Compositions of the *bhaktas* and other devotees included in the Guru Granth Sahib are also placed under appropriate *ragas* and are to be sung accordingly. Besides the contents of the Guru Granth Sahib, compositions of Guru Gobind Singh whose writings form a separate Book, the *Dasam Granth*, Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636) and Bhai Nand Lal Goya are approved canon for recitation as part of *gurdwara* service. In his voluminous corpus, Guru Gobind Singh employs a vast variety of prosodic forms and metres, but hymns usually sung by *ragis* are his *kabitts*, *svaiyyas* and *sabdas*. The work of Bhai Gurdas comprises *vars* and *kabitts* and *savaiyyas*, the first-named in chaste Punjabi and the two latter in *sadhukari*, a form of Hindi mixed with regional diction. Bhai Nand Lal wrote primarily in Persian using *ghazal* as his principal poetic form.

Dating from the time of the Gurus, the preservation of the correct performance style has always been a major concern. Mardana is reputed to have been the first to create a school for such training. Guru Arjan is credited with establishing the *gurmat sangit* or the approved style of hymn-singing for the training of *ragis* and *rababis*. He, himself, undertook the teaching of the pupils and was particular about the accurate rendering of the *sabdas*. Old musical structure and style have survived through some traditional families. Some venerable centres have continued over the generations the programme of instruction for *gurdwara* musicians, among them the one at Daudhar. A few other places that have contributed to the preservation of the style are the Pracharak Vidyala at Tarn Taran, near Amritsar, the Sis Ganj Gurdwara in Delhi and the Shahid Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar.

Sikh music has some limitations placed upon it in order that the religious requirements of the performance may be retained. Emphasis is placed on the melodic line so as to enhance the meaning of the text. The purpose of the musical settings of the words of the Gurus is to impress these upon the consciousness of the listeners through emotional as well as intellectual appeal. The Gurus aimed at conveying experience through the "feelings" to make the maximum impact. Therefore, important words of the text should fall on important notes of the *raga*. Poetic pauses should also be observed. The message must reach the listener through clearly enunciated words. Hymns should be sung with affirmation in a full voice and this gives Sikh music its distinctive character. Tempos may be only slow and medium, not fast. *Sargam* (singing with Sa-Re-Ga) and fast *tans* (rhythmic-melodic figurations) are not permitted because they attract attention to themselves. *Gamaks* or ornaments are limited to those essential to the correct

performance of a *raga*, such as glides between notes, to maintain a connected melodic line. Words must be pronounced clearly and accurately with no adjustments for musical effects. *Ragas* to be used may include only those specified or authorized, so that the emotional content may not be varied by the *ragis*. The music must be free of secular characteristics which may be in vogue at any given time. However, the purpose is not to inhibit the creative faculties of the performers lest the vitality of the music be sacrificed. Hand gestures and clapping, so much a part of classical performance, are not in keeping with the required mood of tranquillity. Hence these are totally prohibited. No appreciation may be shown to the musicians except in the dignified ways ordained by the Sikh religion. Congregational singing is encouraged on certain occasions. For this the *ragi* sings a phrase or line and the congregation repeats. Or, sometimes, the congregation divides itself in two parts, each of them alternately singing lines in unison.

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M. J. C.

GURMUKH (**J. S. Neki**)(gur= Guru; mukh= face), a word employed in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, in several distinct shades of signification. The *gurmukh* is, for instance the Primordial Guru (God) who created all forms; it is He, too, who strings them into one thread—*oan gurmukhi kio akara ekahi suti provanhara* (GG, 250). *Gurmukh* is also the Guru who instils the awe of the Fearless One, and through the Word shapes the mis-shapen (minds). In another sense, *gurmukh* is the God-conscious or the God-inspired man who, imbued with the Word, is crowned with glory at the Lord's portal—*gurmukhi hari dari sobha pae* (GG, 125). In *Maru Solahe* by Guru Amar Das, Gurmukh is the mystic sound (nad), spiritual knowledge (Ved), and the contemplation thereof (GG, 1058). At a few places in the Guru Granth Sahib the word *gurmukh* is used in its literal sense of the face of the Guru. "Beholding the Guru's countenance one attains the highest bliss—*guru mukhu dekhi garu sukhu payau* " (GG, 1400). Varyingly, it signifies "by the Master's Word" (adv.). "By the Master's Word is attained the Name that is like cool water, whereby elixir of the Name divine is quaffed in long draughts—*gurmukhi namu sital jalu paia hari hari namu pia rasu jhik* (GG, 1336).

However, the principal sense in which the word most frequently occurs in the Guru Granth Sahib is that of the God-inspired or theocentric man—one who follows the way of life prescribed by the Guru and acts on his precepts. In this sense, he has his "face turned towards the Guru." *Gurmukh* is a Siddha or the perfect being. Guru Nanak, according to *Sidha Gosti*, had as a pilgrim been searching for such a one all over—*gurmukhi khojat bhae udasi* (GG, 939). *Gurmukh* stands in contradistinction to *manmukh*, the ego-centred one, who has turned his face away from the Guru: the ego-centred one turns his back (upon him)—*gurmukhi sanmukhu manmukhi vemukhia* (GG,

131). The gurmukh thus embodies the acme of the personality typology postulated in Sikh thought. The God-facing man (*gurmukh*) is inspired by the Guru's spirit. He scrupulously follows the Guru's teaching and lives as the Master bids, for he is "merged in the Guru's Word, (GG, 1054-55). *Gurmukh* lives for truth and righteousness. Having bathed in the pool of truth the soul of the *gurmukh* is purified. Truth pervades his speech, Truth bedecks his vision, Truth fills his actions, too. To a *gurmukh* alone is Truth revealed, for he is rid of doubt, delusion and pride—*gurmukhi hovai su sojhi pae haumai maia bharamu gavae* (GG, 1058-59). His is an illumined mind—free from ignorance and dubiety. While a *manmukh* even at his best practises but deception, the *gurmukh* is a serene follower of *truth*. Discrimination *(*vivek*)* is his hallmark and he burns his ego through concentration on the *Sabad (sabda)— gurmukhi haumai sabadi jalae* (GG, 942*)*.

The *gurmukh* dwells upon the Name of God. He constantly meditates through *simran* and gains stability of mind. Mind not attuned to the true self becomes limited. The *gurmukh* dispels all dubiety of the mind—*gurmukhi sagali ganat mitavai* (GG, 942). Freedom from attachment characterizes his conduct. The *gurmukh* carries out actions, but himself he transcends them. His deeds are good spontaneously. He is above pleasure and pain. The Lord Himself has apportioned woe and weal to man. . . but the *gurmukh* is untouched by these. He is a renouncer in spirit even while carrying out duties of the householder. The *gurmukh* indulges in the actions dictated by his destiny and yet is not lost in them because spiritual discipline and divine enlightenment qualify him to distinguish truly between desired action (*pravrtti*) and renunciation (*nivrtti*)—*gurmukhi parvirati narvirati pachhani* (GG, 941). *Jnani, sant, brahmgiani* are some other terms which are used in Gurbani synonymously with *gurmukh*. In Sikhism the connotation of

gurmukh is wide and comprehensive and the term has been applied to a whole continuum of the enlightened ones from the self-searching *jigyasu* through one who has attained *sahaj* (equipoise), mental and spiritual.

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J. S. N.

GURMUKHI (**Hardev Bahri**) is the name of the script used in writing primarily Punjabi and, secondarily, Sindhi language. The word *gurmukhi* seems to have gained currency from the use of these letters to record the sayings coming from the *mukh* (lit. mouth or lips) of the (Sikh) Gurus. The letters no doubt existed before the time of Guru Angad (even of Guru Nanak) as they had their origin in the Brahmi, but the origin of the script is attributed to Guru Angad. He not only modified and rearranged certain letters but also shaped them into a script. He gave new shape and new order to the alphabet and made it precise and accurate. He fixed one letter for each of the Punjabi phonemes; use of vowel-symbols was made obligatory, the letters meant for conjuncts were not adopted and only those letters were retained which depicted sounds of the then spoken language. There was some rearrangement of the letters also. **S** and **h** which were in the last line of the existing alphabets, were shifted to the first line. Again, **a** was given the first place in the new alphabet.

It is commonly accepted that Gurmukhi is a member of the Brahmi family. Brahmi is an Aryan script which was developed by the Aryans and adapted to local needs. According to an opinion, the Brahmi script was introduced between the 8th and the 6th centuries BC. It does not concern us here whether the script was foreign or local, but it has now been established, on the basis of internal evidence, that whatever be its name, the Aryans did have a system of writing which must have been borrowed freely from local scripts. The Iranians ruled in the Punjab in the 3rd and 4th centuries BC. They brought with them Aramaic script, which helped in the growth of Kharosthi largely used in the Punjab, Gandhar and Sindh between 300 BC and 3rd century AD. But even then Brahmi, which in its development in the Punjab had undergone several changes, was

commonly used along with Kharosthi. There are coins of the Bactrian kings and inscriptions of the Kushan rulers having both scripts on them. Brahmi was, of course, more popular on account of its simple curves alternated with straight strokes. Hence, in due course, it replaced Kharosthi and became the single script with composite features affected by various local and neighbourly influences. With the growth of literary and cultural activity during the Gupta period (4th and 5th century AD), the Brahmi script improved further and became more expansive and common.

Immediately later, it developed, especially in northern India, fine curves and embellished flourishes with a small headline over each letter, and became rather ornamental. This stage of Indian script was called Kutil, meaning curved. From Kutil evolved the Siddhamatrika which had the widest use in northern India. Some scholars think that these two scripts existed simultaneously. From the sixth century to the ninth, Siddhamatrika had a very wide use from Kashmir to Varanasi. With the rise of regional languages taking the place of Sanskrit and Prakrit, regional scripts grew in number. Ardhanagari (west), Sharda (Kashmir) and Nagari (beyond Delhi) came into use, and later both Sharda and Devanagari, an offshoot of Nagari, started their inroads into the land of the five rivers. This is evident from the coins of the Ghaznavids and Ghoris minted at Lahore and Delhi. It is also known that the common (non-Brahman and non-official) people used a number of scripts for their temporal and commercial requirements. Of these Lande and Takre characters were most prevalent.

It is on account of these currents that scholars have tried to establish relationships of Gurmukhi with Devanagri (G.H. Ojha), Ardhanagari (G.B. Singh), Siddhamatrika (Pritam Singh), Sharda (Diringer) and Brahmi (generally). Some ascribe it to Lande and

some others to Takri, a branch of Sharda used in Chamba and Kangra. The fact is that it is derived from or at least allied to all these and others mentioned above in their historical perspective.

Regionally and contemporarily compared, Gurmukhi characters have direct similarities with Gujrati, Lande, Nagari, Sharda and Takri: they are either exactly the same or essentially alike.

Internally, **A**, **h**, **c**, ****, **f**, **x**, **n**, **l** letters of Gurmukhi had undergone some minor orthographical changes before AD 1610. Further changes came in the forms of **A**, **h** and **l** in the first half of the nineteenth century. The manuscripts belonging to the eighteenth century have slightly different forms of these letters. But the modern as well as old forms of these letters are found in the orthography of the same writers in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Another reform carried out is the separation of lexical units of the sentence which previously formed one jumbled unit; lately punctuation marks borrowed from English have been incorporated besides the full stop (।) which existed traditionally.

The Gurmukhi script is semi-syllabic in the sense that 'a' is included in the consonant signs in some situations. This 'a' is not pronounced at the end of the syllable. Thus, **kl** is kal, and **rm** is Ram, that is, **k** in **kl** (kal) represents k+a, while **l** represents only l. Other vowels after consonants are shown by vowel symbols which also happen to be the first three letters of the Gurmukhi alphabet. Of these, the first and the third are not used independently. They always have a diacritic attached to them. The second letter is used without diacritics also, and in that case it is equivalent to 'a' as in English 'about'. With diacritics a total of ten vowels are formed, viz., u, u, o, a, a, ai, au, i, i and e. Of

these vocalic diacritics, 'i' occurs before a consonant (although pronounced after it), u and u are written below; a and i after a consonant; and e, ai, o and au over a consonant. Similarly, the nasalization sign is also used over a *consonant* though in fact it nasalizes the vowel. Of all the vowel-marks, called *lagan* in Punjabi, a is the oldest, though initially just a dot was used for it. The vowel-marks i and u are found in Asokan edicts and later inscriptions.

All Gurmukhi letters have uniform height and can be written between two parallel horizontal lines, with the only exception of **a** (the first letter of the alphabet) the top curve of which extends beyond the upper line. From left to right, too, they have almost uniform length, only **A** (aira) and **G** (*ghaggha*) may be slightly longer than the rest. However, the placing of vowel-symbols under and over the letters, a characteristic of all Indian scripts, creates some problems in printing and typing.

No change is effected in the form of the letter when a vowel-symbol or diacritic is attached to it, the only exception being **a** to which an additional curve is added which represents two syllables. This is the only example of a single graphic form representing multiple sounds (and this form has a theological background); otherwise there is no Gurmukhi letter representing more than one phoneme, and there are no digraphs.

a, the first letter in the Gurmukhi arrangement, is non-traditional and appears to be so due to its importance in the Sikh scriptures as **<** , i.e. God is one. After vowels come s and h which are usually placed at the end of Indian syllabary. Other consonantal symbols are in their traditional order. The terms given to the consonants are their reduplicative phonetic values. Thus **k** is called *kakka*, **v** is *vava*. Only **x** is *tainka*. The syllabary ends with **q** *rara*. The total number of letters is 35 (3 vowels, 2 semi-vowels,

and 30 consonants). They are 52 in Devanagari, 41 each in Sharda and Takri. A dot at the bottom of a number of consonants has been used to represent borrowed sounds such as s, kh, gh, z, and f. These have been lately introduced though not as a part of the original alphabet. Geminate (double or long) consonants are indicated by an overhead crescent sign, termed as *adhak* and placed above the consonant preceding the affected one. There is paucity of conjunct consonants in the system. Only **h**, **r** , **v** are combined as second members of the clusters and placed without the head line under the first members. **r** as the second member of the conjuncts may also be depicted under the first member just in the shape of a slanting comma. It is felt that conjunct consonants, thanks to Sanskrit and English influence and expansion of the range of the Punjabi language, are no longer foreign to Punjabi pronunciation. There is, therefore, great need to adopt, adapt or invent them. Attempts have been made by some scholars but their acceptance is still limited.

Gurmukhi has played a significant role in Sikh faith and tradition. It was originally employed for the Sikh scriptures. The script spread widely under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after him under the Punjab Sikh chiefs, for administrative purposes. It played a great part in consolidating and standardizing the Punjabi language. For centuries it has been the main medium of literacy in the Punjab and its adjoining areas where earliest schools were attached to *gurdwaras*. Now it is used in all spheres of culture, arts, education and administration. It is the state script of the Punjab and as such its common and secular character has been firmly established.

The alphabet has also crossed the frontiers of its homeland. Sikhs have settled in all parts of the world and Gurmukhi has accompanied them everywhere. It has a brighter future, indeed, in and outside the land of its birth. Till recently, Persian script was largely

used for Punjabi and there was initially a considerable amount of writing in this script, but it is becoming dated now. However, in the Pakistan Punjab Punjabi is still studied, at postgraduate level, in Persian script.

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Hr. B.

GURPURB (**Harmandar Singh**), a compound of two words, i.e. *guru*, the spiritual preceptor, and *purb*, *parva* in Sanskrit, meaning a festival or celebration, signifies in the Sikh tradition the holy day commemorating one or another of the anniversaries related to the lives of the Gurus. Observance of such anniversaries is a conspicuous feature of the Sikh way of life. A line frequently quoted from the Guru Granth Sahib in this context reads "*babania kahania put saput kareni*—it only becomes worthy progeny to remember the deeds of the elders" (GG, 951). Among the more important *gurpurbs* on the Sikh calendar are the birth anniversaries of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, the martyrdom days of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur, and of the installation of the Holy Book in the Harimandar at Amritsar on Bhadon *sudi* 1, 1661 Bk/16 August 1604. Alongside these may be mentioned Baisakhi, the first day of the Indian month of Baisakh which marks the birth, in 1699, of the Khalsa Panth, and the martyrdom days of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh. There are indications in the old chronicles that the succeeding Gurus themselves celebrated the birthday of Guru Nanak. Such importance was attached to the anniversaries that dates of the deaths of the first four Gurus were recorded on a leaf in the first recension of the Scripture prepared by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan. The word *gurpurb* had come into use in the times of the Gurus. It occurs in at least five places, in Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636), contemporary with Guru Arjan. To quote, "*kurbani tina gursikha bhae bhagati gurpurb karande*—I am a sacrifice unto Sikhs who with love and devotion observe the *gurpurb*" (Varan, XII.2).

What happens on *gurpurbs* is a mixture of the religious and the festive, the devotional and the spectacular, the

personal and the communal. Over the years a standardized pattern has evolved. Yet no special sanctity attaches to the form, and variations can be and are indeed made depending on the imaginativeness and initiative of local groups. At these celebrations, the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, is read through, in private homes and in the *gurdwaras*, in a single continuous ceremony lasting forty-eight hours. This reading, called *akhand path*, must be without interruption; the relay of reciters who take turns at saying the Scripture ensures that no break occurs. Additionally special assemblies are held in *gurdwaras* and discourses given on the lives and teachings of the Gurus. Sikhs march in processions through towns and cities chanting the holy hymns. Special *langars*, or community meals, are held for the participants who at certain places may be counted by the thousand. To partake of a common repast on these occasions is reckoned an act of merit.

Programmes include initiating those not already initiated into the order of the Khalsa in the manner in which Guru Gobind Singh had done in 1699. Sikh journals and newspapers bring out their special numbers to mark the event. There are public functions held, besides the more literary and academic ones in schools and colleges. On *gurpurbs* commemorating birth anniversaries, there might be illuminations in *gurdwaras* as well as in residential houses. Friends and families exchange greetings. Coming into vogue are the printed cards such as those used in the West for Christmas and the New Year day.

Sikh fervour for *gurpurb* celebration had an unprecedented outlet at the time of the tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth in 1967. There is no evidence on record whether centennials previously had been similarly observed. References are however traceable to a proposal for especially marking the second centennial in 1899 of the

birth of the Khalsa. The suggestion came from Max Arthur Macauliffe, author of the monumental work, *The Sikh Religion*, but it did not receive much popular support. The three-hundredth birth anniversary in 1967 of Guru Gobind Singh turned out to be a major celebration evoking widespread enthusiasm and initiating long-range academic and literary programmes. It also set a new trend and format. With the same ardour have been observed some other days as well; in 1969, the fifth centennial of Guru Nanak's birth; in 1973, the first centenary of the birth of the Singh Sabha; in 1975, the third centenary of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur; in 1977, the fourth centenary of the founding by Guru Ram Das of the city of Amritsar; in 1979, the 500th anniversary of the birth of Guru Amar Das; in 1980, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; in 1982, the third birth centennial of Baba Dip Singh, the martyr.

Hm. S.

GURU (**W. Owen Cole**)**,** a spiritual guide or preceptor. The term, long used in the Indian religious tradition, has a special connotation in the Sikh system. The Sikh faith itself signifies discipleship, the word *sikh* (*sisya* in Sanskrit and *sissa* or *sekha* in Pali) meaning pupil or learner. The concept of Guru, the teacher or enlightener, is thus central to Sikhism. The Guru, according to Sikh belief, is the vital link in man's spiritual progress. He is the teacher who shows the way. He is not an intercessor, but exemplar and guide. He is no *avatar* or God's incarnation, but it is through him that God instructs men. He is the perfectly realized soul; at the same time, he is capable of leading the believers to the highest state of spiritual enlightenment. The Guru has been called the ladder, the rowboat by means of which one reaches God. He is the revealer of God's word. Through him God's word, *sabda*, enters human history. The Guru is the voice of God, the Divine self-revelation. Man turns to the Guru for

instruction because of his wisdom and his moral piety. He indicates the path to liberation. It is the Guru who brings the love and nature of God to the believer. It is he who brings that grace of God by which *haumai* or egoity is mastered. The Guru is witness to God's love of His creation. He is God's *hakam*, i.e. Will, made concrete.

A special figure is employed to describe the transference of the Guruship in the Sikh tradition. This figure helps us understand the true nature of Guru. The Guruship passes from one Guru to the other as one candle lights another. Thus the real Guru is God, for He is the source of all light. It is clear that the Guru is not to be confused with the human form (the unlit body). In the Sikh faith which originated in Guru Nanak's revelation, Ten Gurus held the office. In Sikhism the word Guru is used only for the ten spiritual prophets—Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and for none other. Now this office of Guru is fulfilled by the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sacred Book, which was so apotheosized by Guru Gobind Singh.

Various connotations of *guru* have been given based on different etymological interpretations. One generally accepted in Sikhism is that derived from the syllable *gu* standing for darkness and *ru* for its removal. Thus *guru* is he who banishes the darkness of ignorance. According to Sikh belief, guidance of the *guru* is essential for one's spiritual enlightenment.

No particular text dealing with the concept of *guru* is found in the Sikh Scripture, though scattered references abound. They are often figurative and symbolic but are fully expressive of the pre-eminence accorded to the *guru*. He has been called a *tirtha*, place of holy pilgrimage, i.e. purifier; a *khevat*, the boatman who rows one across the ocean of worldliness; a *sarovar*, a lake where swans, i.e. holy saints, dwell and pick up pearls of sacred wisdom for food; a *samund*, ocean which is churned for the gems, for his *bani*, or inspired word, is itself deep like the ocean and its wisdom can be brought out only after long meditation; a *dipak*, lamp which lights up the three worlds. In another comparison the Guru is called *pilak*, elephant controller, as he restrains the mind that is like a mad, romping elephant. He is called *data*, donor of wisdom; *amritsar*, the pool of ambrosia of the Name; a *basith*, one joining the seeker in union with God; *joti*, the light which illuminates the world. Other comparisons are *anjan*, collyrium, which sharpens the sight— a metaphor for the spiritual vision; *sahjai da khet*, the field of equipoise or equanimity; *paharua*, the watchman who drives away the five thieves, i.e. the five evils. He is *sura*, the hero whose sword of *jnana* or knowledge rends the veil of darkness and overcomes ignorance and wickedness, *paras*, philosopher's stone which turns base metals into gold, for he transforms ordinary men into holy saints. There are numerous more comparisons.

The first stanza of *Bhavan Akhari*, one of Guru Arjan's compositions in the Guru Granth Sahib, is a paean of glorification in honour of the Guru (Gurudev) in exalted classical style. Gurudev, i.e. the divinely inspired Master, is the mother, father; he is the Master and the Lord Supreme. He is friend, relative, brother. He confers on the seeker the name of the Supreme Being, i.e. the *mantra*, which is infallible. *Gurudev* is the

touchstone which surpasses all *paras*. *Gurudev* is sacred *tirath* of the ambrosia of immortality, a bath wherein is a bath in *jnana*. *Gurudev* is the banisher of sins; he makes the impure pure. *Gurudev* has existed from beginning of the beginning, from the beginning of the ages and has lasted through all the *yugas*; i.e. his light is eternal. His teachings of the Name alone can save humanity (GG, 250).

The guidance of the *guru* is absolutely essential; no spiritual gain can accrue without the guru's guidance. The view has been constantly reiterated in the Guru Granth Sahib:

Were there to rise a hundred moons, and a thousand suns besides,

Without the *guru*, it will still be pitch darkness (GG, 463).

None other than the *guru* can give enlightenment,

Nor can happiness without him enter the heart (GG, 650).

"None has ever realized God, none at all, without the *guru's* guidance," declares Guru Nanak (GG, 466). Using figurative language, it is pointed out that no blind man can find the path without the *guru*, as nobody can reach the housetop without the stairs and no one can cross the river without a boat. As says Guru Amar Das, he who remains without the Guru's guidance is the rejected one (GG, 435).

What is gained if the *guru's* compassion and guidance are available is thus elaborated:

By the holy preceptor's grace is faith perfected;

By the holy preceptor's grace is grief cancelled,

By the holy preceptor's grace is suffering annulled;

By the holy preceptor's grace is love of God enjoyed;

By the holy preceptor's grace is union with God attained (GG, 149).

The *guru* cleanses the seeker's mind of the impurity and brings it to contemplating on the Name. He breaks the shackles of the disciple who turns away from the excitements of the senses. He seeks his welfare and cherishes him as the beloved of his heart. A touch of him erases all blemishes of conduct. The bard Nall refers to the transforming power of the *guru* thus in symbolic language: "From base metal I became gold by hearing the words of the Guru. Poison was turned into nectar as one uttered the Name revealed by the Guru. From iron a diamond I became by the Guru's grace. From stone one becomes a diamond in light of the *jnana* manifested by the Guru. The Guru transformed common timber into fragrant sandalwood and banished all pain and misery. By worshipping the feet of the Guru, the foolish and the evil became angels—the noblest of men" (GG, 1399).

God, who is "without form, colour or feature," is yet self-communicating. "Through the True Word (*sada*) is He revealed," as says Guru Nanak (GG, 597). Further:

Within every heart is hid the Lord;

In all hearts and bodies is his light.

By the *guru's* instruction

Are the adamantine doors opened.

Here *sabda* and *guru* are juxtaposed. Often they become one word, *sabdaguru*, identifying *sabda* with the *guru*.

The *sabda guru* is the profound teacher;

Without the *sabda* the world remains in perplexity (GG, 635).

Set your mind on the *gursabda*

Which is over and above everything else (GG, 904).

Through the *sabda* one recognizes the adorable Lord

Through the word of the *guru* (*gurvak*)

Is he imbued with the truth (GG. 55).

Sabda is the same as the *guru*, says Guru Ram Das. "*Bani* (the *guru's* utterance or word) is the *guru* and the *guru* is *bani*; in *bani* are contained all the elixirs" (GG, 982). *Sabda*, ever present, is articulated through the human medium, the *guru*, so ordained by the Supreme Being. The historical Gurus of the Sikh faith are believed to have uttered the truth vouchsafed to them by God. "As I received the word from the Lord, so do I deliver it," says Guru Nanak (GG, 722). Guru Arjan: "I know not what to say; I utter only the word I receive from God" (GG, 763). And Guru Rim Das: "Own ye the Sikhs the *bani* of the *guru* as truth and truth alone, for the Creator Himself makes him utter it" (GG, 308).

God, thus, is the primal Guru of the whole creation. This is how Guru Nanak discloses the identity of his own Guru. One of his compositions, the *Sidha Gosti*, is in the form of a discourse with a group of *yogis*. Therein a *yogi* puts the question to him, "Who is your Guru? Whose disciple are you?" (GG, 942). To which Guru Nanak replies:

Sabda is my Guru, and the meditating mind the disciple.

By dwelling on Him I remain detached.

Nanak, God, the cherisher of the world through the ages, is my Guru (GG, 943).

Elsewhere Guru Nanak and his successors affirm that the *Satiguru* is God.

The light of the pure Lord, the essence of everything, is all-pervading.

He is the infinite, transcendent Lord, the Supreme God

Him Nanak has obtained as his *Guru* (GG. 599).

Accredited is the personality of the bright Guru, God

Who is brimful of all might.

Nanak, the Guru is the transcendent Lord Master.

He, the ever present, is the Guru (GG, 802).

According to Sikh belief there is no difference in spirit between such a *guru* and God. "The *guru* is God and God is the Guru; there is no distinction between the two" says Guru Ram Das (GG, 442). "God hath placed Himself within the *guru*, which He explicitly explaineth" (GG, 466). "Acknowledge the Transcendent God and the *guru* as one " (GG, 864). The real personality of a human being is the *atman*, the physical body is only a temporary dwelling place for the *atman* which is eternal and is a spark from the Eternal Flame, the Supreme *Atman* or God. "O my self, you are an embodiment of God's Light; know your true origin" (GG, 441). Being encased in the physical frame, this *atman* becomes so involved in the temptations of the physical world that it forgets its reality and loses contact with the Flame of its origin, whereas the *atman* of the *Guru* remains ever in tune with that Supreme Light from which it has sparked off. It is thus that God is accepted as residing within the *guru*. It is in this sense that there is no distinction seen between the *guru* and God. *Guru* or *satiguru* is thus a word with a double meaning in the Guru Granth Sahib. It may refer to God or to His chosen prophet.

The true *Guru* is easily distinguished. "The true *guru* is one who has realized the Supreme Being and whose association saves the disciple" (GG, 286). "The true *guru* is one in whose heart dwells the Name Divine" (GG, 287). "He by meeting whom the mind is filled with bliss is the true *guru*. He ends the duality of the mind and leads (the

disciple) to the ultimate state of realization" (GG, 168). "Praise, praise be to the true *guru* who demolishes the fort of dubiety; wondrous, wondrous the true *guru* who unites the seeker with the Lord" (GG 522). The *guru* is ordained as such for the liberation of mankind. He transmits the message of God to men and performs acts of grace to save them. The *guru* is sent by God, but he is not God's incarnation. "Singed be the tongue which says that the Lord takes birth" (GG, 1136). He is *ajuni* (unborn); He is *saibhan* (self-existent). Highest tribute and adoration are reserved for the *guru*. Devotion to the *guru* is deemed to be the quintessential quality of a religious man. The pain of separation from the *guru* and the joy of meeting with him find expression in poetry of deep intensity, as in Guru Arjan's hymn in Rag Majh (GG, 96-97).

Guru Nanak was suspicious of human preceptors, *pandits*, *gurus* and *pirs*. They are generally denounced as blind guides, self-styled and traders upon ignorance and superstition. He warns against them:

Never fall at the feet of one
Who calls himself *guru* and *pir,* and goes begging.
He who eats what he earns
And from his own hands gives some in charity,
He alone knows the true way of life (GG, 1245).

The disciple whose *guru* is blind will not attain the goal (GG, 58). Taking up this thought the third Guru said:

The disciples whose *guru* is blind perform only blind deeds.
They follow their own wayward will,
And ever utter the grossest lies (GG, 951).

When Guru Nanak speaks of his *guru* or *satiguru*, it is not such teachers that he has in mind. The true *guru* is the means of the self-revelation of God. He makes the concealed and ineffable God known. He symbolizes the supreme act of God's grace in revealing Himself as Truth, as the Name, as the Word. The true *guru* comes to unite all people of the world and to unite them to the Supreme Being. A false *guru* creates schisms, divisions and prejudices. The true *guru* as manifested in the history of the Sikh faith comes to suppress the forces of evil and to rally the forces of good. He comes to resuscitate the values of true religion, *dharma*.

The Sikh faith developed under the guidance of ten successive Gurus from 1469 to 1708. Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, appointed no personal successor, but bequeathed the guruship to the Holy Book, the Guru Granth Sahib. The holy Word or *sabda* had always been referred by the Gurus as well as by their disciples as of Divine origin. The Guru was the revealer of the Word. The Word was identified with the Guru when Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed the Holy Book Guru before he passed away. Bards Balvand and Satta theorize that of their three aspects—*joti*, i.e. light, *jugati*, way or procedure, and *kaia*, i.e. body—it is only *kaia*, the body, that changes as succession passed from one historical Guru of the Sikh faith to the next. *Joti* and *jugati* remained the same. As sang the bards: "*Joti oha jugati sai sahi kaia pheri palatiai*" (GG, 966). From their verse emerges this concept of three aspects of the guruship.

God is the source of all light or consciousness. God kindles that light, in the chosen human body, the Guru; in the *joti*-aspect the Guru is the most enlightened human being, he is in direct communion with God. He communicates the message of God to mankind. He transmits His light to the world. Without the *guru*, darkness prevails. Says

Guru Nanak, "The light of the *guru* alone dispels darkness" (GG, 463); "The *guru* is that lamp which illuminates the three worlds" (GG, 137). Balvand and Satta in their hymn in the Guru Granth Sahib affirm that the historical Gurus of the Sikhs shared the same *joti* (light). The *joti* got transferred to the successor's body. Thus, right from 1469, the year of the birth of Guru Nanak, to 1708, the year of the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh, it was one continuing *joti* manifesting itself in the Ten Gurus.

This awareness of one light acting through the successive Gurus was so permeating among the Sikhs that Mobid Zulfiqar Ardastani (d. 1670) wrote in his Persian work *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, "The Sikhs say that when Nanak left his body, he absorbed himself in Guru Angad who was his most devoted disciple, and that Guru Angad was Nanak himself. After that, at the time of his death, Guru Angad entered into the body of Amar Das. He in the same manner occupied a place in the body of Ram Das who in the same way got united with Arjan. They say that whoever does not acknowledge Guru Arjan to be the very self of Baba Nanak becomes a nonbeliever."

Guru Gobind Singh, last of the Gurus, himself wrote in his poetical autobiography called *Bachitra Natak*, "Nanak assumed the body of Angad. . . Afterwards, Nanak was called Amar Das, as one lamp is lit from another. . . The holy Nanak was revered as Angad, Angad was recognized as Amar Das. And Amar Das became Ram Das. . . When Ram Das was blended with the Divine, he gave the Guruship to Arjan. Arjan appointed Hargobind in his place and Hargobind gave his seat to Har Rai. Har Krishan, his son, then became Guru. After him came Tegh Bahadur."

Balvand and Satta further proclaim that the Gurus indicated the same *jugati* or the method and way of life. The ministry of Guru Nanak combining *joti* and *jugati*, took care

of both the worlds, the spiritual and the temporal. It was the ministry of *deg* (charity), and *tegh* (power), of *miri* (temporal authority) and *piri* (spiritual power). According to the bard, Nanak founded sovereignty on the firm rock of truth. . . *Nanaku raju chalaia sachu kotu satani niv dai* (GG, 966). As Nanak transferred the *joti* (light) to Lahina who became Guru Angad, he unfurled the umbrella over his head—*lahane dharionu chhatu siri*, i.e. he invested Lahina with the authority to carry on with the practice he had introduced. The Gurus preached devotion, *bhakti* or *nam* (meditation on the Divine Name), recitation of *bani*, the sacred texts, and *kirtan*, i.e. singing of the Lord's glory in *sangat* or holy assembly. Along with *nam*, they inculcated the values of *kirat*, labouring with one's hands, and *vand chhakna*, sharing with others the fruit of one's exertions. The Gurus had carved a clear way for the disciples.

The Guru's *kaia* or body was the repository of God's light. It was the medium for the articulation of *sabda*, Word Divine, or God's message. So it was worthy of reverence. The historical Guru was the focal point of the *sangat* and the living example of truths he had brought to light. He himself lived up to the teachings he imparted to his disciples.

The *sangat* turned into Khalsa in the time of Guru Gobind Singh who introduced *khande di pahul*, i.e. baptism of the double-edged steel sword. With the formation of the Khalsa, the concept of the *Guru Panth* formalized. By becoming the sixth person to receive *amrit* at the hands of the Panj Piare, the Five Beloved, who formed the nucleus of the Khalsa Panth, Guru Gobind Singh testified to his own membership of the Panth, and to having merged himself with it and endowed it with the charisma of his own personality. The *bani*, always revered by the Sikhs as well as by the Gurus as Word

Divine, was however above all. This was something which even the Gurus themselves could not change. It was this superiority which Guru Gobind Singh acknowledged in 1708 when he invested Scripture as Guru. The idea of the Guru Panth lives on in the Khalsa. But the Khalsa itself could not alter the fundamental tenets of the Sikh faith as enunciated in the *bani*. The Guru Granth Sahib was, in the presence of the Khalsa, proclaimed Guru. The finality of the pronouncement remains a cherished truth for the Sikhs and the Holy Book has since been the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical, for them. No living person, however holy or revered, can now have for them the title or status of Guru. For Sikhs the Guru is the teacher, the prophet under direct commission from God—the Ten who have been and the Guru Granth Sahib which is their continuing visible manifestation.

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W. O. C.

GURU KA LANGAR (**Prakash Singh**) (lit., *langar* or refectory of the Guru) is a community kitchen run in the name of the Guru. It is usually attached to a *gurdwara*. *Langar*, a Persian word, means 'an almshouse', 'an asylum for the poor and the destitute', 'a public kitchen kept by a great man for his followers and dependants, holy persons and the needy.' Some scholars trace the word *langar* to Sanskrit *analgrh* (cooking place). In Persian, the specific term *langar* has been in use in an identical sense. In addition to the word itself, the institution of *langar* is also traceable in the Persian tradition. *Langars* were a common feature of the Sufi centres in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even today some *dargahs*, or shrines commemorating Sufi saints, run *langars*, like Khwaja Mu'in ud-Din Chishti's at Ajmer.

In Sikhism, the institution of *langar* owes its origin to the founder, Guru Nanak himself. Community kitchens came into existence with the *sangats* or holy fellowships of disciples which sprang up at many places in his time. Sikhs sat in *pangat* (lit., a row) without distinctions of caste or status, to share a common meal prepared in the *langar*. Besides the kitchen where the food was cooked, *langar* stood for the victuals as well as for the hall where these were eaten. The disciples brought the offerings and contributed the labour of their hands to prepare and serve the food. Guru Nanak and his successors attached a great deal of importance to *langar* and it became, in their hands, a potent means of social reform. The former gave it the central place in the *dharamsala* he established at Kartarpur at the end of his preaching tours. He worked on his farm to provide for himself and for his family and to contribute his share to the common *langar*. He had such of his disciples as could afford to set up *dharamsalas* and *langars*. Among them were Sajjan Thag, then lost to godly ways, and a wealthy nobleman, Malik Bhago,

both of whom had converted to his message. Bhumia, formerly a dacoit, was asked by Guru Nanak to turn his kitchen into a *langar* in the name of God. A condition was laid upon Raja Shivnabh of Sangladip (Sri Lanka) that he open a *langar* before he could see him (Guru Nanak). The Raja, it is said, happily complied.

Guru Angad, Nanak II, further extended the scope of the institution. He helped with cooking and serving in the *langar*. His wife, Mata Khivi, looked after the pilgrims and visitors with the utmost attention. Such was her dedication to work in the langar that it came to be known after her name as Mata Khivi ji ka Langar. The bard Balvand pays homage to her in his verses, in the Guru Granth Sahib. To quote the stanza:

> Blest, sayeth Balvand, is Khivi [the Guru's wife],
>
> Comforting by far is her presence to the disciple,
>
> Amply she distributes food in the Guru's *langar*.
>
> The fare includes *khir*, rice cooked in milk and *ghee*,
>
> Which has the taste of ambrosia itself.
>
> (GG, 967

The *Var* by Satta and Balvand also applauds Guru Amar Das's *langar* wherein "*ghee* and flour abounded." In spite of rich variety of food served in his *langar*, Guru Amar Das ate a simple meal earned by the labour of his own hands. "What was received from the disciples was consumed the same day and nothing was saved for the morrow." Contributing towards the Guru ka Langar became an established custom for the Sikhs. Partaking of food in Guru ka Langar was made a condition for disciples and visitors before they could see the Guru. Guru Amar Das's injunction was: "*pahile pangat pachhe sangat*"—first comes eating together, then meeting together." *Langar* thus gave practical

expression to the notion of equality. Emperor Akbar, who once visited Guru Amar Das at Goindval, had to eat out of the common kitchen like any other pilgrim. As the *Mahima Prakash* records, the Emperor refused to step on the silks spread out for him by his servants when going to call on the Guru. He turned aside the lining with his own hands and walked to the Guru's presence barefoot.

Bhai Jetha, who came into spiritual succession as Guru Ram Das, served food in Guru Amar Das's *langar*, brought firewood from the forest and drew water from the well. By such deeds of devoted service, he gained enlightenment and became worthy of the confidence of Guru Amar Das. *Langar* served to train the disciples in *seva* and to overcome class distinctions.

The institution of *langar* had become an integral part of the Sikh movement by now and, with the increase in its numbers, it gained further popularity and strength. With the development under Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan of Amritsar as the central seat of the Sikh faith, the capacity of the local Guru ka Langar increased manifold. Sikhs came from far-off places to see their Guru and to lend a hand with the construction work. They were all served food in Guru ka Langar.

Guru Hargobind and Guru Tegh Bahadur travelled extensively in north and northeast India. This led to the establishment of many new *sangats*. Each *sangat* meant an additional *langar*. In the reign of Guru Gobind Singh, the institution of *langar* acquired further significance. At Anandpur, the new seat of Sikhism, a number of *langars* were in existence, each under the supervision of a devoted and pious Sikh. Food was available in these *langars* day and night.

Once Guru Gobind Singh, disguised as an ordinary pilgrim, made a surprise check of the *langars* at Anandpur. He discovered that Bhai Nand Lal's *langar* was the best maintained. He complimented him and asked others to emulate his standards of dedication and service. One of Guru Gobind Singh's commandments was that a Sikh visiting another Sikh's door must be served food, without hesitation or delay. Another of his sayings ran: "*Gharib da munh guru ki golak hai* —to feed a hungry mouth is to feed the Guru." This spirit of common sharing and of mutual co-operation and service was the underlying principle of the Sikh tradition of *langar*.

"Keep the *langar* ever open" are reported to have been the last words of Guru Gobind Singh spoken to Bhai Santokh Singh before he passed away at Nanded. One of the lines in his *Dasam Granth* reads: "*Deg tegh jag me dou chalai*—may langar (charity) and sword (instrument of securing justice) together prevail in the world." The first Sikh coin minted in the eighteenth century carried the Persian maxim: "*Deg tegh fateh*—may *langar* and sword be ever triumphant."

The *langar* continued to perform its distinctive role in days of the direst persecution. Bands of Sikhs wandering in deserts and jungles would cook whatever they could get, and sit in a *pangat* to share it equally. Later, when the Sikhs came into power, the institution of *langar* was further consolidated because of increased number of *gurdwaras* running the *langar*, and assignment of *jagirs* to *gurdwaras* for this purpose.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh made grants of *jagirs* to *gurdwaras* for the maintenance of *langars*. Similar endowments were created by other Sikh rulers as well. Today, practically every *gurdwara* has a *langar* supported by the community in general. In smaller *gurdwaras* cooked food received from different households may comprise the

langar. In any case, no pilgrim or visitor will miss food at meal time in a *gurdwara*. Sharing a common meal sitting in a *pangat* is for a Sikh an act of piety. So is his participation in cooking or serving food in the *langar* and in cleaning the used dishes. The Sikh ideal of charity is essentially social in conception. A Sikh is under a religious obligation to contribute one-tenth of his earning for the welfare of the community. He must also contribute the service of his hands whenever he can, that rendered in a *langar* being the most meritorious.

The institution of Guru ka Langar has served the community in many ways. It has ensured the participation of women and children in a task of service of mankind. Women play an important role in the preparation of meals and the children join in serving food to the *pangat*. *Langar* teaches the etiquette of sitting and eating in a community. Again, *langar* has played a great part in upholding the virtue of equality of all human beings.

Besides the *langars* attached to *gurdwaras*, there are improvised open-air *langars* at the time of festivals and *gurpurbs*. Specially arranged *langars* on such occasions are probably the most largely-attended community meals anywhere in the world. There might be a hundred thousand people partaking of food at single meal in one such *langar*. Wherever Sikhs are, they have established their *langars*. In their prayers, the Sikhs seek from the Almighty the favour: "*Loh langar tapde rahin*—may the hot plates, the *langars*, remain ever in service."

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Pk. S.

HUKAM (**Gurbachan Singh Talib**) The Idea Of The Supreme Being (God) In Sikhism, Sikhism a Theistic Creed. Sikhism is a Theistic religion, and totally rejects all reasoning which may attempt to prove that the universe is an automatic machine, or that it is a continuation of atoms which are self-created and self-perpetuating. According to the Sikh belief God is self-created and all that exists, has emanated from Him. As to any speculations about the origin of God or the creation of the universe by Him, no mythological or any other explanation is offered. Man's intellect cannot penetrate the Divine mystery, and hence all that man can attempt is to feel or realize the existence of God through intuition or spiritual experience, called *anubhava* in Indian philosophy. Logic or any other kind of reasoning cannot prove the existence of God, for against one kind of reasoning another can be advanced. Hence for man it is to try to realize the existence of God in a spirit of humility, and to engage in prayer and devotion, so that he may become one with the Supreme Reality, that is God. Guru Nanak says in Japuji (Stanza 16):

> By One Word the whole vastness of the universe was created.
>
> Resulting in millions of streams of existence.

Again, in stanza 21 it is said:

> The Yogi knows not the day and date of creation.
>
> Nor any one the month and season.
>
> The creator of the universe alone knows this secret.

God is believed in Sikhism to be eternal—that is, He is without beginning and without end. All else that is visible, had a beginning and will end. Even the sun and

the moon, the stars, the earth—all will end. The gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indira—and all others are mortal. In other words, they are subject to the control of Time which marks their beginning, decline and end. God alone is Timeless (*Akal*). *Akal* is one of the key-concepts in Sikh spiritual thought. While this term is from the Sanskrit in its origin, consisting of 'a' (negative prefix) and *Kal* (time), the particular spiritual and philosophical signification which belongs to it in Sikh thought is unprecedented in Indian philosophy.

Sikhism is strictly monotheistic in its belief. This means that God is believed to be the one and sole Reality in the cosmos, and no god or goddess or power like Satan or *Ahirman* or any other has reality such as God's. God alone is worthy of worship, and the highest end of existence, that is *mukti* or liberation can come through Devotion to God alone. All other worship is false and a waste of the precious gift of the human life. Besides its monotheism, Sikhism also emphasizes another philosophical idea, which is known as monism. Monism is the belief that all that our senses apprehend is only appearance; that God is the sole Reality. Forms being subject to Time, shall pass away. God's Reality alone is eternal and abiding. Hence behind the shows of things, the spiritual vision is always aware

of the reality of God. According to this philosophy, the differences created by man's limited thinking which result in selfishness, egoism and hate are meaningless. Since nothing exists except God; the man of God sees in all beings the reality of God. A few texts from the holy Granth Sahib will illustrate this point:

That which is inside man, the same is outside
him;
nothing else exists;
By divine prompting look upon all existence as
one and undifferentiated;
the same light penetrates all existence. (Sorath
M.I.II—bage 599).
The Divine (like the lotus) is in the water; yet
untouched by it:
Its light penetrates this water entire;
None is near, and none far;
I find it ever near, and chant its praises.
Nothing else exists inside or outside (man);
All happens as He wills it;
Listen Pharthari: This is what Nanak says after
contemplation.
(Asa M. I Ashtpadiyan I—page 411).
What should the yogi have to fear?

Trees, plants, and all that is inside and

outside, is He Himself.

(Gauri Ashtpadiyan M.I. 7 - page 223).

Differences are owing to man's ignorance of the Supreme Truth, and to the influence on him of Maya (illusion).Through prayer and devotion and Divine aid the illusion created by Maya is lifted, and then man views the Reality of the universe as one, leaving no scope for hatred, avarice or egoism.

Conception of the Supreme Being

The conception of the Supreme Reality, i.e. God is fixed in Mul Mantra (The Basic Creed) of the Sikh faith, which stands at the head of the Guru Granth Sahib and is considered to be the opening of the holy text of Japuji. Mul Mantra is chanted and written on all solemn occasions when Divine blessing is sought to be invoked in any undertaking. In its original form it reads:

Ek Oankar, Sati-Nam, Karta-Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akal Murati, Ajuni, Saibhang, Guru Prasadi.

Translated into English, this means: The One Supreme Being; Eternal Holy Reality; The Creator; Without Fear; Without Rancour; Timeless Form; Unborn; Self-Existent; Realized Through Divine Grace.

The various elements in the above creed on careful study will yield the true significance of the Sikh belief and its idea of God. The first veer-phrase Ek Oankar contains two terms: Ek (One) and Oankar (The Supreme Being). Oankar comes from the Upanishad and is an extended form of Om, which is the holiest of all names of God. In the Guru Granth Sahib Om is also used—once by Guru Nanak and twice by Guru Arjan Dev. Oankar is the Eternal Reality, above gods and goddesses and is holy and self-existent. To it, in order to emphasize the idea of the sole Reality of God, Guru Nanak has added the numeral 1, which in several Indian languages is pronounced as EK. This EK Oankar is the transcendental, unattributed Absolute. In other words, it is that which is above all Existence, has no attributes, since these will limit its absoluteness and Eternity. In Sukhmani (xxiii.6) it is said:

Whenever he wills, He creates the vast universe;

As He wills He is again EK Oankar.

EK Oankar here as elsewhere implies that Reality which is above and beyond all other existence.

The next phrase, Sati Nam contains two terms. Sati (*Satya*) is both Real and Holy. Nam is a spiritual idea, which stands for the Essence, the Absolute Reality. It is

not merely the name as is commonly believed, but that for which the name of God stands, that is, the Divine Essence.

Karta Purakh: Karta is Kartar (Creator). The universe is fashioned by God and not by any deity. He is the Kartar, which is one of the commonly emphasized terms for God in Sikh belief. Purakh is the same Purusha (Male, this Mighty Eternal Creator). Purusha has come from the Rig Veda into Indian philosophy, and is one of the holiest words, as implying the Eternal Creator.

Nirbhau (without fear) and Nirvair (without rancour) are two negative attributes, implying God's absoluteness. Not being subject to any other being, and not being subject to need. He is fearless. Since He is the creator of all existence, He is without hate. He is all love, all benevolence. Hence in Sikh teaching, God is referred to again and again as Father, implying His love and care for all creation.

Akal, as said earlier, is Timeless, Eternal. This term is characteristically Sikh. In numerous Sikh phrases this term occurs. Akal is as unmistakably the Sikh name for God, as Allah in the Muslim tradition.

Ajuni implies that God is not subject to birth and death. Hence the Incarnations of God who are worshipped in various religions in India and outside, are not God, for

God is unborn. He is not subject to the physical process of having a father and a mother. Related to this is *Saibhang*. This is a popular form of Sanskrit Swyambhu (Self Existent).

The last phrase, Guru-Prasadi implies that God's knowledge or realization can come to man neither through reasoning or learning nor through ritual performances like pilgrimages, fasting and keeping sacred days. None of the attempts in the ritual practice of religion will help His realization. Through devotion and prayer God's grace (kindness, mercy) may be aroused and through that alone may He be realized. This is the great mystery of mysteries, which no man can understand. Grace comes mysteriously and in ways unexpected. Only prayer and devotion from the depth of the heart may draw it on man. For grace (*prasad*) other terms employed by the holy Gurus are *mehar* (love), *karam* (bounty), *nadar* (glance of compassion), *daya* (compassion), *kirpa* (kindness). So, this last phrase is essential in the enunciation of the basic idea of the Sikh faith.

God Without Fear

In the teaching of Sikhism God is conceived as being without form (*nirankar/nirakar*). In accordance with this faith, Guru Nanak is known as Nirankari (Believer in the

Formless). No image or idol or any figurine can represent God, or be worshipped as God. All existence is God's visible form, but no part of it is a substitute for God. God is also Nirguna (unattributed) as said earlier. This means that he is not subject to the 'three qualities' of ignorance (*tamas*), passion (*rajas),* and reasoning intellect (*sattva* as is all creation or Maya in the different stages of its evolution). God is eternally perfect. Man's ideal must also be to rise above the three qualities of Maya and enter into the divine state of attributelessness through prayer and devotion. In the state of devotion or *bhakti*, God is also believed to have certain noble qualities, such as love, compassion, fatherly concern for all creation and the upholding of the moral law in universe. It is through such qualities that He comes close to humanity and becomes 'the Beloved of His devotees' (*Bhakta vatsala*). To love He yields, but no other persuasion.

Man loves Him for the principle of Goodness and Righteousness that is in Him. He is mighty and is constantly intervening in the concerns of the universe by destroying evil. Thus arrogant tyrants such as Ravana, Duryodhana and certain demons in Indian religious history, are destroyed by God's might operating through certain God-inspired heroes. This belief is also shared by certain

other great religions. So, God must be understood to be full of universal love, but also that Might which destroys evil and tyranny. The moral law cannot be defied by man with impunity. Guru Nanak in the hymns on Babar's invasion points out how the rulers were humiliated at the hands of Babar's soldiery, which became the instrument of divine justice.

In expressing the idea of God, Guru Nanak and his successors in the holy office of Guruship have employed some other terms which stand for the Absolute Reality. The most commonly used in this respect is Brahm. To give further emphasis to the idea of His transcendental character, this name is used as Par-Brahm (the Brahm beyond human thought). Guru is made to signify the human Preceptor as well as God, from whom all enlightenment and realization proceeds. Guru is also used in the extended compound form as Gurudev—the Lord Enlightened. Satguru (the holy master) is another term used for God. Thakur, Sahib, Swami (all three mean lord, master) are frequently used. From the current Indian phraseology Parmeshwar (the Supreme Lord) is taken. Prabhu (Lord) always stands for God. Often the epithet Sacha (true, holy, eternal) is used as a noun substantive to designate God. Pritam (Beloved),

Piyara (Loved One) frequently occur in Gurubani as substantives to designate the idea of God.

G. S. T.

HUKAMNAMA (**Ganda Singh**), a compound of two Persian words *hukm*, meaning command or order, and *namah*, meaning letter, refers in the Sikh tradition to letters sent by the Gurus to their Sikhs or *sangats* in different parts of the country. Currently, the word applies to edicts issued from time to time from the five *takhts* or seats of high religious authorities for the Sikhs –the Akal Takht at Amritsar, Takht Sri Kesgarh at Anandpur Sahib (Punjab), Takht Harimandar Sahib at Patna (Bihar), Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib at Nanded (Maharashtra) and Takht Damdama Sahib at Talvandi Sabo (in Bathinda district of the Punjab). Letters addressed to Sikhs by historical personages as Baba Gurditta, the elder son of Guru Hargobind, Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi, widows of Guru Gobind Singh, and Banda Singh Bahadur are also included in this genre. Some of the letters of the later Gurus to *sangats* or prominent Sikhs have in recent years been traced and published in two collections, with most of the material common to both, the first entitled *Hukamname*, edited by Ganda Singh (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1967), and the second *Nisan te Hukamname*, edited by Shamsher Singh Ashok (Amritsar, Sikh Itihas Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1967). A separate anthology of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *hukamnamas*, in Devanagari transcription and with an English translation, was published by Punjabi University, Patiala, in 1976. All *hakamnamas* were originally written in Punjabi, in Gurmukhi characters. Those of Guru Hargobind as also most of Guru Tegh Bahadur's are believed to have been written in their own hand. It appears, however, that in the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the text was written by a scribe while the Guru put down on the top of the letter an authentication mark, an invocation or some direction. There is a near uniformity in the format of the *hukamnamas*. The earlier ones bore no date; from AD 1691 onwards they were usually

dated and also, at times, numbered. Later on, the practice of recording at the end of the text the number of lines in the body of the letters also came into vogue. The scribes began the text with the words, *Sri Guru ji ki agia hai* (It is the order of the revered Guru, or the revered Guru desires), preceded by the formula *Ik Onkar Guru Sati,* later *Ik Onkar Satiguru (*Remember One God, the True Guru*)*. Banda Singh Bahadur (1670-1716), blessed by Guru Gobind Singh himself, introduced a seal in Persian script as authentication mark and recorded the initial formula to read as *Ik Onkar Fateh Darsanu (*God is One, Victory to (His) Presence), and the text began with *Sache Sahib di agia hai* (by order of the True Master). *Hukamnamas* of Mata Sundari begin with the words *Sri Mata ji di agia hai*, and those of Mata Sahib Devi *with Sri Akal Purakh ji ka Khalisa Sri Mata Sahib Devi ji di agia hai* (Mata Sahib Devi's order to the Khalsa of the Timeless One).

Apart from their importance to the Sikhs as the sacred remembrances of the Gurus, the *hukamnamas* are invaluable historical documents. Names of persons and places to which they are addressed provide clues to the composition, socially, of early Sikhism and its spread, geographically. One of the earliest *huakmnamas* discovered is a missive addressed by Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) to *sangats* at Patna, Alamganj, Sherpur, Bina and Monghyr, in Bihar, and includes no fewer than 62 names of prominent Sikhs belonging to those communities. *Hukamnamas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) and Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) are addressed to *sangats* as far apart as Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet in the east and Patan, present-day Pakpattan, in Pakistan in the west. In addition to blessings from the Gurus and acknowledgement of the devotees' gifts, these letters contain instructions for the followers to cultivate love and prayer as

well as indications with regard to the offerings they might bring. The demands ranged from cash contribution in the form of gold or *hundis* (bills of exchange) to pet birds, garments, weapons, cannons and war elephants. Sometimes these demands are written in abbreviated forms. The *hukamnamas*, which are dated, help to fix the chronology of certain events. For instance, letters instructing Sikhs not to recognize *masands*, or tithe-collectors, but to bring their offerings directly to the Guru on the occasions of Baisakhi and Divali are all written during 1699 or later, confirming the abolition of the institution of *masands* simultaneously with the creation of the Khalsa on 30 March 1699. The almost identical letters, both dated 1 Kartik 1764 Bk/2 October 1707, while informing the *sangats* at Dhaul and Khara of Guru Gobind Singh's meeting with the Emperor (Bahadur Shah), enjoined upon them to present themselves duly armed when the Guru arrived in Kahlur (Anandpur). This was not to be, for the Guru passed away at Nanded, in the South, a year later, but the Guru's intention of returning to the Punjab is clearly established. The *hukamnamas* are important linguistically as well and provide crucial clues for tracing the development of the Gurmukhi script and Punjabi prose.

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G. S.

HUMAI (**Ego**) (**Taran Singh**). The term *haumai* is a compound of two pronouns *hau* and *mai* each meaning 'I', and thus, *haumai* means 'I, I'. The ancient Indian term, for *haumai* has been *aham-kara*—'I-maker' or 'I-doer'. In the Chhandogya Upanisad, it (*sham-kara*) is equated with *atman* or soul, conceived as the immanent Divinity. But, its most popular sense, later, was the one attached to it in the Sankhya philosophy viz. it is a mental organ or function, evolved from matter, and mediating between the material and the spiritual. In Buddhism, it has two slightly varying meanings viz. 'mind involved in I-making-mine-making conceit' and 'the bias of I-making-mine-making from the *aham-kara* that all actions spring. According to the Pali Pitakas, springs of action are six, three being roots of good, three of bad actions or three of moral and three of immoral. The three roots of bad actions are greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and want of intelligence (*moha*); the other three are their opposites—detachment, love and intelligence. Modern Mahayanists hold that in the Bodhisattva theory, altruism as opposed to egoism takes a more prominent position, and the goal of nirvana is not one of personal salvation but of transferred merit, saintly aspiration being for the salvation of all beings.

In English, the word nearest to *haumai* is ego which, metaphysically, from the Latin root, means ‘a conscious thinking subject’ as opposed to ‘non-ego’ or object—thus, it stands for the ‘self’, soul and spirit. The term ‘egoism’, ethically, stands for the theory which holds the self-interest to be the foundation of morality, and the egoist, thus, is systematically selfish and self-opinionated. An egocentric is, as we call it, self-centred. An egoist can think of nothing else, but of ‘I’ and ‘me’, and is invariably ‘talking about himself’, in ‘self-conceit’ and ‘selfishness’. Duality too has been recognized in the ego, and thus, ego is subject-consciousness and object consciousness, or, of ‘I’ and ‘Me’—it is not dualism of essentially different substances, but it is of such a nature as to form together one individual conscious being. Again, a distinction has been drawn between Theoretical

egoism or the Subjective Idealism which maintains that one’s own individual ego is the only being that a man can logically assert to exist; and the Practical egoism which has three forms—logical, aesthetic and moral, according to Kant. A logical egoist considers it unnecessary to bring his own judgement to the test of another’s understanding; the aesthetic egoist is fully satisfied with his own

tastes; and the moral egoist makes himself the end of all his activities—nothing is valuable unless it benefits him. In ethics, egoism maintains that the standard of conduct for the individual is his own good on the whole. So, the inclinations and purposes of an egoist are immediately and exclusively directed towards himself; he, in his consciousness, thinks about himself and his own immediate interests only, is self-centred and self-opinionated.

Egoism is based on an atomistic conception of society viz. every social whole is composed of individuals, the nature of each one of whom is to preserve his own life, to seek his own good, to satisfy his own desires; and good and evil are relative to the individual. But is is a false conception, as no man is self-contained. An individual's interests are not different from the interests of the society or of all members of the community. Every individual is a member of an organic whole and the complete good is the good of the whole of which he is a member. Higher men realize their true good by denying what appears to be their private good, and they so far identify themselves with their state or church that they are content to die so that the institution may live. Self-interest, self-conceit, self-seeking and self-reference—all become irrelevant to them.

Using the term *haumai*, viz. I-ness and My-ness, Guru Nanak has given his view of *haumai* most comprehensively in sloka VII.I of the Asa-di-var (ode in the Asa Measure). At the same place, in another sloka, his first successor, Guru Angad, has also tried to interpret the view of Guru Nanak on the subject. Guru Nanak's sloka, referred to in the above, reads, in English translation, as this:

In ego man comes, in ego he goes,
In ego he is born, in ego he dies.
In ego he gives in ego he receives,
In ego he earns, in ego he loses.
In ego he is true or false,
In ego he has considerations of sin and virtue.
In ego he descends to hell or rises to heaven,
In ego he laughs, in ego he weeps.
In ego he begrimes, in ego he washes himself,
In ego he is misled into the considerations of castes and kinds
In ego he is foolish, in ego he is wise,
And loses. all sense of salvation and liberation.
In ego he is absorbed in Maya (illusion),
In ego he is overtaken by delusion.
In ego are men born as creatures
Man can see the Gate, if he understands his ego,

Without realization, all talk of ego that entangles a man.

Nanak, under the Supreme Will our record is made,

As one sees the one, we perceive the other. (Asa-di-var VII.I)

In the light of the above sloka, Guru Nanak's view of *haumai* can be constructed as this:

1. *Humai* is a creation of the Supreme Being as it comes into existence under His Will. He is the master of the play of life. The whole play of life is caused by the presence of ego in man which gives rise to the conflict between the higher and lower selves.

2. *Haumai* is a condition of the mind. Mind itself is born of the five elements which are the objects of the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. That is, *Haumai* is material and not spiritual in its basic nature.

3. *Haumai* (I-ness, My-ness) is so powerful an instinct that it influences each and every activity of man (or animal) throughout the course of his existence which may run into myriads of births and lives. Ego is the basis of his transmigration from life to life, serves as the initial force or motive in all his actions, directs every choice of man—true or false, good or evil, painful or pleasurable.

4. *Haumai* is that condition of mind which keeps man ignorant of the true reality, the true purpose of his life, and thus keeps him away from salvation and union with God.

5. Guru Angad has described *haumai* as a deep-rooted disease. So far as it remains as the condition of the mind, it (mind) cannot conduct itself in a healthy way. But, again, Guru Angad assures that the word of the Guru is the medicine which can cure the disease of ego.

6. An egoist everywhere sees the projection of his own mind only.

7. One hears the word of the Guru when the Supreme Being Himself blesses him with His grace. The will of the Supreme binds a man to transmigration while His grace liberates him from that bondage of the cycle of births and deaths. Ego binds a man, grace liberates.

8. Ego is the basis of individuality which at once separates one from the totality of life or cosmic and social life. This separation gives the idea of preservation of the self which leads to struggle for existence.

9. The idea of struggle for existence makes the egoist self-seeking, conceited, self-assertive, selfish and proud. As he secures his interests and himself, he develops a complex of superiority. He begins to feel proud

of his caste, birth, country, creed, colour, sex, prowess, learning, culture, conduct, rituals, etc. Thus, he begins to feel that he is born to rule while others are there to serve his will and carry out his order. They are just the means to preserve and watch his interests.

10. Guru Nanak has no where given a hint that *haumai* can be purified and trained to serve nobler purposes or to work for the salvation of man. According to him 'ego' constitutes the wall of separation between God and man. So, this has to be completely removed; it is to be burnt, destroyed and eliminated altogether.

11. However, mind or consciousness is a great power. If mind becomes pure, it realizes God. Mind is not merely ego; it has the powers of cognition, perception, understanding, reasoning and right discrimination. These functions of mind in Indian terminology, have been called *ahamkar*, *mana*, *chit*, *budhi*, *bibek*, etc. But mind is purified only when the ego is banished completely. Mind must be rid of ego. Guru Granth describes ego as disease, falsehood, wall, dross, dirt, poison, etc. Mind, to be healthy, must get rid of the disease, falsehood, separation, dross, dirt and poison. When ego is banished nobler and higher faculties of mind come into play.

12. In the total scheme of God, ego makes the play of the world possible by creating the conflict between spirit and matter or good or evil. Ego is not what is called the free will as opposed to determinism. Man has no free will. His entire course is determined by the will of God. God Himself puts him on the path of evil or good, so called, for in fact the duality of evil and good also does not exist.

The Guru Granth calls the egoist as *manmukh* or *sakat*. He is mind-oriented and follows the irrational carnal urges of lust, anger, avarice, attachment and pride. He is thoroughly a materialist and is bound to the material joys. He is always double minded, vacillating between God and Mammon. When man shakes off ego, he merges his self with the cosmic self. Such a man considers himself as a drop in the ocean of life and understands that his good or interest is common with the good of the other members of the human society or family. Such a man identifies himself with the society. He has no individual interests. An egoist does everything with desire for reward or fruit for himself while a non-egoist is *niskani* (desireless) in all his actions.

In the Sidhgoshti (A Dialogue with the Siddhas), Guru Nanak (vide stanze-68) says that an egoist creates a world

of his own life. The spider who weaves a web out of his ownself and is entangled in it and is thus killed ultimately by his own false creation. An egoist lives in an imaginary world of his own wherein he himself matters the most and remains the centre of the entire universe or a small circle of his relatives is all that matters. In selfishness, he thinks of his own salvation only and resorts to the so-called religious acts of supposed merit such as dips at the so-called holy places, alms-deeds, austeritier, meditation, samadhis (concentrations), recitations, mortification, etc. (Asa-di-var, VIII-2, also ibid, IX, I, IV.2). So-called men of religious piety who sin against others by discriminating against them on grounds of caste, creed, birth, position, sex, learning, and claim superiority for themselves for observing *Shradh* or *sutak* or purity of the cooking-squares are indeed egoists. They do not meditate on the Name and live in a fool's paradise that these rituals and religious practices would save them. Similarly, men of power, wealth, position, beauty and bravery are proud, and in their egoism, care not a fig for the feelings of others, behave like tyrants, do high-handedness; but they also live in a world of their own fabrication as they have to reap the

fruit of what they had sown. Being forgetful of the Name, all these men of ego suffer terribly.

In ego, a world springs up, O man,
Forgetting the Name, this world suffers.
A Gurmukh thinks of knowledge and truth, and burns ego by the word of the Guru.
He is pure in mind, thought and word,
he merges with the True One. (Sidhgoshti, 68)

A Gurmukh is the antithesis of an egoist. He mediates on the Name and so purifies his mind that all the evil and selfish tendencies leave him. This is banishing of the ego. There is no other remedy for the otherwise incurable disease of ego. Mediation on the Name alone can banish ego and make one the servant of God. The disciple of the Name inculcates in the devotee the virtues of temperance, honest, non-attachment, moderation, gratitude and love of the Lord. These are the qualities of a servant of God too. This plane of character guarantees the state of bliss and continuous pleasure to a Gurmukh.

Guru Nanak is more concerned with practical life than theorising. In *bani*, he has placed *haumai* in opposition to *Hukam* (Supreme Will), *Seva* (service), *Gyan* (discriminating knowledge), *Sehj* (poise, middle-path), *Nam* (meditation, devotion) and *Nirlaip* (non-attachment).

(1) In the Japu (pauri II), with which the Guru Granth opens, he has placed *haumai* in opposition to the Supreme Will or human, saying that one can be a man of realization and truthfulness only if he conducts himself in accordance with the Supreme Will. He has drawn some sort of distinction between order and will, as it is the will which creates order. God is absolutely free to ordain an order. His will creates the order which works in the cosmic evolution and course. By His will: all forms come into being, they develop life, grow exalted, become good or evil, receive pain or pleasure, win Grace and get liberation or are doomed forever in transmigration, etc.; but an egoist is led to believe, erroneously, that he can transgress the will or order and by his efforts or actions develop, get exalted, become good, get pleasure, and win liberation. By such thinking, he denies, not only the Supremacy of the Divine Will, but the absoluteness of the Supreme Being itself. The Guru asserts that 'all are subject to the Supreme Will, none outside its pale', but the egoist asserts that he is beyond the pale of the Supreme Will and thus he feels not the need of being devoted to that and meditating on the Name. The Guru asserts that a cosmic order exists, the egoist does not recognize this and feels that he can defy any order or

rule. He does not care for the rules which make a man really exalted or otherwise, great or otherwise, and bring suffering or pleasure. He is selfish, self-willed, self-seeking and sins against the common interests of society or community. He defies the social laws. The egoist does not understand the supremacy of the will though it is there. He suffers for his ignorance as he constantly sins against humanity. He is not a responsible being and does not contribute to the total good of mankind by following higher and nobler tendencies which too are present in his mind. He is narrow in outlook. We must attune our will to the Supreme-will, our self to the higher self, and choose the higher course of good which may result in the good of all.

(2) As already referred to, Guru Nanak has placed *haumai* in opposition to *seva* or service of God which also means service of mankind. The man who wants to serve God must attune his ego to the Supreme-will. For this, he need develop a certain pattern of life. In opposition to this sloka on ego, the Guru has given the character of a servant of God as under:

> The service of God is done by the men of temperate lives who meditate on Him as the truest of the true,
>
> They refrain from treading the path of evil, and doing good, practise honesty.

They have broken the bonds of worldliness, and eat and drink moderately.

"Thou art lavish in They mercies, of which Thou givest daily ever-increasingly"—

thus glorifying they obtain the glorious Lord. (Asa-di-var, VII)

The conflict between ego and will-to-serve is removed when man, through the grace of Guru and God, meditates on the Name. By meditation and devotion, his will gets attuned to the will of the Supreme. Meditation on the Name gives him a set character which is temperate, refrains from the path of evil, practises honesty, is unattached to the world, eats and drinks moderately and thus obtains the Lord. A man of meditation believes that God is the giver of every gift and He gives through His mercy and gives ever-increasingly, while an egoist believes just the other way. He lives for himself only, lives intemperately, eats and drinks immoderately, and earns by hook or by crook, not caring the least for honesty. An egoist is bound or attached to the world; he is attached to his own interests; he cares for the need of his family only and with that his circle ends. A servant of God looks after the needs of the humanity, the society and the community. He breaks the

bonds of the body and the family or narrow considerations. Mankind is his family.

(3) Ego and right knowledge are always in opposition. In a hymn (No.33) of Sri rag, Guru Nanak emphasizes that a man of service who alone is honoured in the court of the Lord, is a man of right discrimination; he is a man of enlightenment which comes through living according to the teachings of the holy books, under the fear of the Lord and by knowing the truth. This man goes beyond the attractions and charms of Maya and is not deceived by it, while a greedy man, an egoist, always vacillates. The lamp of the mind, the Guru says, is lighted this way:

> If we practise the teachings of the holy books, If we put the wick of the Lord's fear in the lamp of the mind,
>
> If we give it the fire of truth:—
>
> This, then, is the oil, and this is how the lamp is lighted.
>
> If the inside is lit like this,
>
> then the Lord is obtained.

A man who is impressed by the word of the Guru, adopts such a way of life. He surrenders himself completely to the will of the Lord. He fears the Lord. An egoist does not care for the word of the Guru, nor for truth, nor for the

Supreme-will. He believes that his own intellect is supreme and he can make no error. A man of pure intellect will serve mankind, not an egoist.

(4) Ego and *bhakti* (*nam-bhakti*) do not go together. Guru Amardas (Vadhans, Pada-ix) has emphatically stated that *haumai* (ego) and *nam* (meditation on the Name) are in direct conflict, the two can never dwell in the same mind. Guru Nanak (Asa, Ashtpadi-II), portraying the life of a man of meditation, says that externally he also appears to be a man of ego as he lives in the world and earns and spends like all men, but he then clarifies, he is unattached in his mind.

Outwardly he is an egoist,
He appears to behave and eat like that;
But he is liberated inwardly,
he is never attached.

A bhakta lives in the world, earns and spends, rears up family, brings up his children. But still he shares his earnings with others. He lives temperately and moderately. He can save to spend in the service of man. A servant of God can never be proud and egotistical. Meditation on the Nam gives non-attachment.

Haumai is, in fact, a denial of God, the Supreme Reality; it is the denial of the existence of a cosmic

order, it is the denial of the oneness of the human society; it is denial of the path of love, knowledge, service and devotion' it is living in an imaginary world of own fancy; it is living in constant conflict with all else in the creation. But it is God's own creation to serve as an instrument of the play of life which He enjoys. God also sends the Guru to free men of the grip of *haumai* so that they may be reclaimed to God. The Guru is sent to mankind as God's grace to it. He banishes *haumai* root and branch and unites man with God again.

T. S.

ISHVAR (**Major Gurmukh Singh**) from Sanskrit Isvara (isa = ruler, master, lord+vara= environing, enclosing, i.e. the all-pervasive Lord) is one of the several names used in Indian philosophy for God, the Ultimate Reality, also known as Brahman. There is however a subtle conceptual difference between Isvara and Brahman as interpreted by Sankaracharya, philosopher of Vedanta. Brahman, he holds, is the Ultimate Reality or Pure Consciousness devoid of all attributes (*nirguna*) and all categories of the intellect (*nirvisesa*), while Isvara is the personal aspect of the impersonal Brahman. Isvara is Apara Brahman or Lower Brahman as compared to the Absolute which is called Para Brahma or Higher Brahman. Isvara is the phenomenal aspect of the Transcendent Brahman who is Infinite, beyond the reach of finite thought and who can only be described in negative terms such as ineffable, indescribable, acosmic, timeless, etc. All normal talk about God is therefore about Isvara. Even positive attributes such as transcendent, self-existent, perfect, etc. really refer to "conditioned Isvara" rather than to the "unconditioned Brahman". In brief, Isvara is God as related to the phenomenal reality, the personal aspect of the impersonal Reality. He is the Lord of Maya, the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer, immanent throughout His creation.

In Sanskrit, *isa* and *isvara* are also defined as name of the Hindu gods Siva, Kubera and one of the Rudras and even as "name of the goddess Durga or any other of the Saktis or female energies of the deities." In Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, Is, Isar or Isuru, Punjabi forms of Skt. Isvara, appear sparingly for Siva as well as for God (GG, 2, 6, 316, 516, 923, 925, 1082); *isur* once stands for great men is general (GG, 816); and *isaru* once as name of a person other than Siva (GG, 952). The composite term

paramesar (Skt. *Paramesvara* = *parama*, supreme, highest + *isvara*) for God appears more often; once it is spelt even *paramesvar* (G.G, 299).

Sikhism does recognize the traditional categories of transcendent and immanent as also of *nirguna* (without attributes) and *saguna* (with attributes, *sarguna* in Punjabi), pertaining to God, but not the Sankarite distinction between higher and lower Brahman. The emphasis here is on the unicity of Ultimate Reality, the "1 Onkar". The term Parbrahma (Sankara's Para Brahman) appears frequently in the Sikh Scripture but Aparbrahma or Apara Brahman never. For the Sikhs the same Absolute is both *nirguna* and *sarguna* (GG, 98, 128, 250, 287, 290, 862). The *nirguna* Brahman manifests himself as *sarguna* Brahman, in relation to His attributes.

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M. G. S.

JATHA (**Bhagat Singh**), from Sanskrit *yutha* meaning a herd, flock, multitude, troop, band or host, signifies in the Sikh tradition a band of volunteers coming forth to carry out a specific task, be it armed combat or a peaceful and non-violent agitation. It is not clear when the term *jatha* first gained currency, but it was in common use by the first half of the eighteenth century. After the arrest and execution of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716, the terror let loose by the Mughal government upon the Sikhs forced them to leave their homes and hearths and move about in small bands or *jathas*, each grouped around a *jathedar* or leader who came to occupy this position on account of his daring spirit and capacity to win the confidence of his comrades. For every able-bodied Sikh who had undergone the vows of the Khalsa, it became necessary to join one or the other *jatha* to fight against the oppressors. Besides skill in the use of arms, he had to be a good horseman, because in guerrilla warfare, such as the Sikhs had to resort to against the superior might of the State, speed and mobility were of paramount importance. The weaponry, in the beginning, ranged from knobbed clubs, spears and battle axes to bow and arrows and matchlocks. A long sword and a dagger were of course carried by every member of the Khalsa. Some of them wore armour, but no helmets. During raids on enemy columns and baggage trains, the booty most valued was good horses and matchlocks so that most of the *jathas* were gradually equipped with firearms. Heavy artillery pieces were not favoured, as they impeded mobility and speed. However, as Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, says, they did carry lighter pieces such as *zamburaks* or camel swivels and long-range muskets, called *janjails*. Usually, each *jatha* had to fend for itself; yet it was necessary to co-ordinate its activities with those of others and operate under an overall plan. The diverse *jathas* voluntarily accepted the control of

Sarbatt Khalsa, the assembly of all the Sikh *jathas* at Amritsar on the occasions of Baisakhi and Divali when plans of action were formulated in the form of *gurmatas* or resolutions adopted in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

The brief respite provided by a temporary detente with the government during 1733-35 enabled the Sikh *jathas* to assemble and stay in strength at Amritsar with immunity. Nawab Kapur Singh, their chosen leader, knit the entire force into two *dals*, i.e. branches or sections—the Buddha Dal (army of the old) and Taruna Dal (army of the young). Taruna Dal was further divided into five *jathas* each with its own flag. With the end of the detente and the renewal of State persecution with redoubled vigour, the Sikhs had again recourse to smaller and more numerous *jathas*. Need for co-ordination forced them again to regroup themselves on the Divali of 1745 into 25 *jathas*, but the number multiplied again. Ali ud-Din Mufti, *'Ibrat Namah*, mentions 65 *jathas*. They were finally reorganized on the Baisakhi of 1748 into 11 *misls*, under the overall command of Jassa Singh Ahluvalia. The entire fighting force of the Sikhs was named Dal Khalsa Ji. The *misls* were large bodies of mounted warriors and might have been divided into subunits, but the terms *jatha* and *jathedar* gradually fell into disuse. The leaders of *misls* and the Dal Khalsa preferred to be called *sardars*, a term borrowed from the Afghan invaders under Ahmad Shah Durrani. The establishment of monarchy under Maharaja Ranjit Singh put an end to all these older institutions—*jatha*, *misl*, Dal Khalsa, Sarbatt Khalsa and *gurmata*.

During the religious revival of the later nineteenth century, the Sikh reformers adopted the term Khalsa Diwan for their central bodies and Singh Sabha for the local branches as well as for the entire movement. The term *jatha* was generally restricted to

bands of preachers and choirs, a connotation still in vogue. It was during the Gurdwara Reform movement of the early twentieth century that *dal* and *jatha* reappeared. The apex body of Sikh agitators for political action for the liberation of their shrines from the mahants, the effete priestly class, came to be named the Shiromani Akali Dal and its locally organized branches Akali Jathas. During the subsequent *morchas* or peaceful agitations organized by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, a body that later got statutory recognition under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, and by the Shiromani Akali Dal, which emerged as the major political party of the Sikhs, each band of volunteers going forward to press a demand or to defy an unjust fiat of the government, was called a *jatha*. This use of the term is still prevalent.

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B. S.

JHATKA, (**Piara Singh Sambhi**) the Sikh mode of killing an animal for food, also stands for the meat of an animal or bird so killed. Derived, etymologically, from *jhat*, an adverb meaning instantly, immediately or at once, *jhatka* signifies a jerk, snap, jolt or a swift blow. For Sikhs *jhatka karna* or *jhatkauna* means to slaughter the animal instantaneously, severing the head with a single stroke of any weapon or killing with gunshot or electrocution. The underlying idea is to kill the animal with the minimum of torture to it. *Jhatka* is opposed to *kuttha*, that is meat of an animal slaughtered by a slow process in the Muslim way known as *halal* (lit. legal, legitimate, lawful). *Kuttha* is a participle derived from the Punjabi verb *kohna* (lit. to torture). While slaughtering for food, a Muslim must incise the throat of the animal to the accompaniment of the exclamation of the *kalima*, the Islamic formula meaning "By the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate." For *jhatka*, a Sikh while delivering the blow may utter Sat Sri Akal (lit. True is the Timeless Lord), which is both a Sikh war slogan and a salutation, but there is no idea of sacrifice or ritual involved in such utterance, and it is not mandatory either. Sikhism does not sanction sacrificial or ritual killing.

Historically, there is no positive injunction enforcing *jhatka* mode of slaughter laid down by the Gurus. However, Guru Gobind Singh, when manifesting the order of the Khalsa in 1699, enjoined upon Sikhs to abstain from *kuttha* or *halal* meat introduced by the Muslim ruling class. That many high-ranking Hindus had succumbed to the practice of eating *kuttha* is evidenced from a verse of Guru Nanak's in *Asa ki Var*: "They eat *kuttha* of goats killed with the pronouncement of alien words, i.e. *kalima*, but do not allow anyone to enter their cooking square (to guard against pollution by touch). . ." Instructions regarding *jhatka* mode of slaughter are contained in various *Rahitnamas* or

codes of conduct for the Sikhs, and the Sikh chronicles written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They all affirm that Guru Gobind Singh made the taking of *kuttha* one of the four major *kurahits*, or violations of the Sikh code of conduct. However, two of these sources say positively: "Kill the male goat in the *jhatka* way if you want to eat, but do not ever look at any other type of meat" (*Rahitnama* of Bhai Desa Singh), and "Slaughter male goats through *jhatka* and eat; do not go near carrion or *kuttha*" (Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*). *Rahitnama* of Bhai Desa Singh also enjoins the slaughtering to be carried out away from the kitchen. Traditionally, it is also to be away from a holy spot. The mention of male goat in the chronicles is only illustrative and does not exclude other animals or birds the flesh of which the Sikhs usually eat.

Not many Sikhs are habitually meat-eaters. Their staple diet mainly consists of cereals, pulses, vegetables and milk products. Some of their sects even practise strict vegetarianism. The Sikh religion however neither recommends nor prohibits the eating of flesh. During their own rule in Punjab, the Sikhs practised tolerance and never tried to enforce *jhatka* on their Muslim subjects. But during the British rule, the predominating Muslim community in western Punjab opposed *jhatka*. Even at government level, *jhatka* was not allowed in jails and Sikh detenues during the Akali movement and after had to resort to protests and agitations to secure this right. One of the terms in the settlement between the Akalis and the Muslim-dominated Unionist government in the Punjab in 1942 was that the use of *jhatka* meat would be permissible in public institutions.

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P. S. S.

JIVA (**J. S. Neki**) or living being is not merely physical or material body (*deha*). It is not even biological or vital breath (*prana*). Nor is it just a cluster of sense-impressions (*manas*), nor intellect (*buddhi*), nor ego (*ahankara*). The essence of *jiva* is something beyond all these. It is the Transcendent Self or *atman*, which is the knower (*saksi*), the seer (*drishta*) and pure consciousness (*chit*).

The composite whole of *chit* and *achit*, *drishta* and *drishya*, *karta* and *karana* is the total personality called *jiva*, the embodied self.

The constituents of *jiva*, according to Vedant, are (i) *Atman* or Self, (ii) *Avidya* or ignorance enveloping the self, (iii) *Chidabhasa* or reflection of the Self in the Ego, (iv) *karama sarira*, the causal body, (v*) linga sarira* constituting *prana* (vital airs), *man*, *ahankara* and *buddhi*, and (vi) gross physical body.

In *gurbani*, *jiva* (also *jia*) essentially stands for living being, an organism. *Jete jia jivahi lai saha*, all living beings live by breath (GG, 144), exemplifies this connotation. The same is also reflected in this line from *Akal Ustati*, *jiva jite jal men thal men*, as many living beings as abide in water or on land.

The term *jiva* also stands for *atma* or *jivatma* since that is presumed to be the source of life in any living being. Such lines as *ishvar jiva ek im janai*: thus reckon Ishvar (God) and *jiva* as one (*Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*) or *jiu eku aru sagal sarira*: consider it the same one *atma* in all different bodies (GG, 330).

The term has also been employed to connote *man* or *chit*, i.e. mind or consciousness, as in *jia sangi prabhu apuna dharta*: He fixes his mind on his Lord (GG, 384).

In brief, *jiva* in *gurbani* stands for a living being or for any of the features—life, consciousness, mind or soul (*jivatma*)—that are deemed to characterize a living being in general, more specifically man.

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J. S. N.

JIVAN-MUKTA (**Wazir Singh**), in Sikhism the ideal and aim or objective of man's spiritual life. The term is derived from *jivan-mukti* (jivan=life; mukti=release, liberation, emancipation freedom from bondage), and means one who has attained liberation from human bondage or one who has attained to the highest spiritual state of being in tune with the Ultimate while still living. The idea of *mukti* is encountered, with some conceptual variations, in practically all religious faiths, e.g. *moksa* in Hinduism, *nirvana* in Buddhism, *Nijat* in Islam and salvation in Christianity. The belief underlying the concept of *mukti* is, that the soul, a particle of the Supreme Soul, is, while embedded in the physical frame, in a state of *viyog* or separation and longs for *sanyog* or reunion with its source, which for it is the supreme bliss.

If the body is the cause of the soul's bondage, it is clear that its release essentially involves its separation from the earthly cage, meaning death; and that is how it is generally understood. In the Indian context *mukti* means deliverance of the human soul from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth to which it is destined in consequence of its past and present *karma* (actions, deeds). Various ways, such as spiritual knowledge (*jnana marg*) disinterested service, ritualism (*karma marg*), austerities (*hath yoga*) and devotion to God (*bhakti marg*) are suggested to break the incarnation cycle. Whatever the soteriological means, the end is usually sought in the cessation of incarnate existence. Besides this idea of *videh* (incorporeal) *mukti*, however, references to the concept of *jivan-mukti* are also found in the ancient scriptural literature of India. But it is in the *bani* (utterances) of the Sikh Gurus that *jivan-mukti* and *jivan-mukta* receive a greater emphasis and fuller treatment. The saint-poets of the Bhakti movement had freely employed the vocabulary of *mukti*. Guru Nanak and his spiritual successors accepted the

terminology made current in the preceding generations by sages and men of piety. But, as in the case of numerous other concepts, the expression *mukti* is invested with a new meaning in their *bani*. It is no longer the annihilation of human existence but the spiritual quality of one's life that serves as the central principle in the Sikh conception of *mukti*. The body constitutes no barrier between the soul and the Supreme Soul. On the contrary, "the body is the fort limitless wherein resides He, the Cherisher Himself" (GG, 514). "Within the body resides the Ineffable One; the *manmukh* (the self-willed) fool does not know this and roams abroad in search of Him" (GG, 754). Guru Arjan goes to the extent of rejecting *mukti* in the traditional sense of a post-death state and substitutes it with constant love of the Divine as the ideal state of being (GG, 534).

The root cause of the alienation of the human soul from its Supreme source is *avidya* (ignorance), according to the Vedantic way. In Buddhism, where *nirvana* means soul's freedom from suffering, the cause of suffering is *trsna* (craving). The Gurus, however, hold *haumai* (the individuating sense of ego or I-ness) as the cause of ignorance, craving and bondage, as also of suffering. If liberation is sought, it is not from life or body but from the shackles of ego. Guru Nanak's definition of *jivan-mukta*, therefore, is in terms of the negation of egoism:

He alone is liberated while still living

Who is cleansed of the ego inside (GG, 1010).

The state of egolessness is the state of perfect detachment, not of renunciation, nor of self-mortification.

The *jivan-mukta* of Sikh conception is the realized soul, identified as *gurmukh* (one whose face is turned towards God). He leads the life of a common householder

enriched by the experience of spiritual harmony within. "He surrenders himself completely to the Will of God; joy and sorrow are the same to him; he experiences bliss always and *viyog* (separation) never" (GG, 275). Instead of the differentiating ego, the all-encompassing Divine Spirit resides in him. Existentially he belongs to the world, essentially he transcends the world.

A variant of the term *jivan-mukti* in *gurbani* is dying-in-life (*jivat marna*). The paradoxical expression of dying while alive is employed by the Gurus in order to stress the importance of abandoning one type of life and the adoption of another. It is dying to the life of *haumai*, of 'five evils', and entering into a life of contemplation, altruism and love of God. The person attaining to the state of *jivat-marna*, in this sense, is the one qualified for the designation of *jivan-mukta*. He or she is the one who has realized the essence of human life, the essential life, concealed under the sheaths of egoism, of ignorance, passion, avarice, pride and infatuation.

The ideal state of *jivan-mukta* is, notionally, within the reach of every human being, since anyone following an ethical and spiritual course faithfully, may receive the *nadar* (God's grace or blessing). Yet, as the Gurus point out, rare are the individuals who actually arrive at the summit. The blessed few, fulfilled by the experience of Supreme realization, set out to serve their companions. They strive for the total well-being of fellow men, in all spheres of existence. However, the success of a *jivan-mukta* in heralding an order of enlightened individuals or the Kingdom of God on earth, is not to be measured in terms of the number of "converts" to his way of life, but in terms of the model of humane, and enlightened living he presents for emulation.

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W .S

KAM (**L. M. Joshi**) (Skt. *kama*), meaning desire, longing, concupiscence, sensuality or lasciviousness, is counted among the five cardinal sins or sinful propensities. In common usage, the term stands for passion for sexual pleasure and it is in this sense that it is considered an evil in Sikhism. In Brahmanical literature *kam* is not always disdained. Kam as Kamadeva is a god in the Hindu pantheon comparable to Eros of Greek mythology and Cupid of the Romans, and is as such not contradictory to spiritual life. *Kam* (gratification of desire) is in Hinduism one of the four objectives (*purusarthas*) of human life, the other three being *artha* (acquirement of wealth), *dharma* (discharge of duty), and *moksa* (final emancipation). Jainism and Buddhism, which arose as protest movements against Brahmanical ritualism and superstition, however looked upon *kam* with horror. For *munis* and *sramanas* of Jainism and Buddhism and for *yogis* of the Sankhya school, *kam* was to be deliberately suppressed to achieve ultimate release. As a result, they preached celibacy and asceticism.

The Gurus rejected Brahmanical superstition as well as self-mortifying austerities. Yet they recognized the four *purusarthas*, referred to in *gurbani* as *char padaraths* or the four human pursuits. However, in Sikhism *kam* is not unrestricted gratification of carnal desires, but an impulse which needs to be kept under check like other impulses and passions. Unrestrained propensity towards *kam*, especially sexual relationship outside the marital bond, is condemned in the strongest terms in Sikh codes of conduct as well as in the Scripture. It is a destructive evil and a deadly sin. To quote Guru Arjan, Nanak V: "O Kam, thou landest people in hell and makest them wander through many births, enticest all minds, swayest all the three worlds and undoest one's meditation, austerities and restraint. The pleasure is ephemeral and thou afflictest high and low alike " (GG,

1358). Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX, says: "In the sinning heart reigns *kam* and the fickle mind breaks out of control. *Kam* casts its noose even upon *yogis*, *jangams* and *sannyasis*. Only those imbued with God's Name (fall not a prey to it) and are able to go across the ocean of existence" (GG, 1186). Bhai Gurdas describes an ideal Sikh as one who is loyal to his wife and "regards all other women as mothers, sisters and daughters" (Varan, XXIX. 11). Guru Gobind Singh also said: "Love your own wedded wife ever so more, but do not go to another woman's bed even in a dream." Sikh codes of conduct strictly prohibit extramarital relations.

While prescribing self-control and restraint and not total annihilation of *kam*, the Gurus suggested two ways of channelizing and sublimating it. On the one hand, they pronounced *grihastha* or married life to be the ideal one, and, on the other laid down love of God and absorption in His Name as the essential principle of spiritual discipline. Says Guru Gobind Singh, "Hear ye all, I proclaim here the truth: only they who love God find Him." The image of a devotee most common in Sikh Scripture is one of a wife deeply in love with her *kant* or husband presently separated from him, and waiting, craving, praying for a reunion with him. Such fervent devotion cannot but bridle the wayward passion in man. According to Guru Arjan, a person who has cultivated the love of the Lord's feet would desire neither kingship, nor worldly power, nor even *mukti* or liberation (GG 534).

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L. M. J.

KAMAL (**G. S. Talib**), also written as *kanval* in Punjabi, is a flower, lotus, bearing the richest symbolic and philosophical significance in Indian lore.

Its use in Indian romantic and spiritual literature goes back to ancient times. It carries, in Sanskrit, a multiplicity of names such as *saroj*, *jalaj*, *varij*, *niraj* (grown in water), *pankaj* (grown in mud), *padma*, *aravind*, *pundrik*, and *srinivas* (abode of Lakshami, the goddess of wealth). This flower grows in muddy water and yet it keeps itself untouched by it: thus it serves as a symbol of purity amidst impurity. In its usage in the religious literature it generally stands for the self emancipated from contamination of allurements and temptations of the mundane existence. In this sense, it is used in the *Bhagavadgita* (V. 10) and at numerous places in the Sikh canon. In the latter, it has been coupled with the duck which holds its wings dry while swimming on water. In the mythology and spiritual history of India, it figures in the legend of Visnu from whose naval sprang the lotus that contained Brahma, thus giving Visnu the attributive name of Padmanabha, i.e. One who has lotus in his navel. Visnu is also called Padmapani (having lotus-like hands) but this latter attributive name is used for Brahma and Buddha as well. Lakshmi, Visnu's consort, is called Kamala or Padma (one with a lotus in hand) and Kamalalaya because, according to one Hindu legend, she appeared at creation floating over water on the expanded petals of a lotus.

Brahma is called Padmalaya because he was seated on the lotus that came from Visnu's navel. Like Brahma, Buddha is also delineated in figures as seated on a lotus.

Padma-rekha (the lotus line) is believed to be a lotus shaped figure of lines on the right hand or foot of a great man betokening eminence. Such a figure is said to have

adorned a foot of Krsna. Guru Amar Das, the third spiritual preceptor of the Sikh faith, is also said to have had such a sign on his foot.

Kamal also symbolizes the beauty of various organs of the body, so that we have such substantives as *kamal-nayan, aravind-lochan* (lotus-eyed), *mukharvind* (the lotus mouth), *charna-kamal, charanarvind* (lotus feet), *hast-kamal* (lotus hand), etc. Apart from Hinduism and Buddhism, in Jainism too the lotus has been employed as a sacred, auspicious symbol standing for purity and spirituality.

In the Indian spiritual tradition, a particular posture in meditation, commended also in Sikhism, is called *padmasan* (the lotus-posture), i.e. sitting cross-legged with the body slightly inclined forward in a meditative mood. In the mysticism of *hath yoga*, the six nerve centres sought to be penetrated by the aroused *kundalini* are also called *padmas* (lotuses).

The typical representation of lotus in Indian art is somewhat stylized in the form of a standing cup, symbolizing the mind receptive to the elixir of illumination (*gyan, jnana*), as against the mind not receptive to that elixir which has been likened to a cup turned upside down—in the direction of *maya*, i.e. illusion or ignorance.

In Sikh sacred literature its symbolic use is of frequent occurrence. So ubiquitous is this use of the lotus symbol in this context that by a long-established convention the metaphor has come to signify the object symbolized, without overtly instituting a comparison or giving it the form of a simile or a metaphor. Says Guru Nanak, "When by the Master's Word is the lotus opened its wanderings and desires cease" (GG, 224). The lotus here stands for the mind. Similarly, Guru Amar Das also affirms that "When by the Lord's Word the lotus is illumined, the egoistic, foul thinking is cast out" (GG, 1334).

The symbol of lotus has also been employed to represent *gurmukhs*, untouched by worldly impurities. Guru Nanak says "God's devotees, beloved of Him, remain uncontaminated even as a lotus in a pool remains untouched with water" (GG, 353). Similarly, Guru Ram Das says: "The devotee, even though a householder, remains ever detached, just as lotus in water" (GG, 1070). At some places, the human body, because of its beauty and tenderness, has also been compared to the lotus flower. Guru Amar Das says: "The lotus of the body must one day wither away" (GG, 1051).

The lotus at places has also been employed to symbolize the mankind in general. There it comes in association with the symbol of swan that is used for the pure and the liberated among the mankind. Guru Nanak says: "One is the lake, on which are found lotuses of unique beauty, ever blossoming, in fragrance. There swans pick up the orient pearls, sharing in the supreme bliss of the Lord" (GG, 352). The lake here symbolizes the supreme Self, the lotuses, the creatures of the universe, and the swans, the liberated souls. At another place, all these symbols represent, in unison, the supreme Self (lake), mankind (the lotus) and the liberated (swan), signifying the essential oneness of all. Guru Nanak, invoking the supreme Self, says: "Thou art the lake and the swan, the lotus and the lotus-buds, and Thou beholdest in joy Thy own beauty" (GG, 23). The devout attachment of the self to the Lord has been symbolized in the *gurbani* as the attachment of the humming bee (*bhanvar*) to the lotus (GG, 496). Bhai Gurdas in his *Varan*, XXIV. 23, paying homage to Guru Arjan's sacrifice, compares the Guru in bliss of absorption with Lord to the humming bee lying at night inside the shelter of the closed lotus flower. The honey of the lotus flower has also been used symbolically to express the sweetness of the bliss of the mystic union of the self with the supreme Self. At the close of the *Arati*, it

is said, "My heart yearns for the sweet honey of Thy lotus feet fragrant in unquenchable thirst. Bestow on the *chatrik*, Nanak, the water of Thy bounty and grant him endless abode in Thy Name" (GG, 663).

The lotus thus symbolizes, in Indian religious poetry, the pure and the unsullied self, the liberated self, the mind receptive to illumination of knowledge, a right-minded householder uncontaminated by worldly impurities and devoted to, and blissfully united with the supreme Spirit. This is the theme it illustrates in *gurbani*.

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G. S. T.

KARAH PRASAD (**Taran Singh**). *Karah*, soft sweetened food made of flour or semolina and ghee, which placed before the Guru Granth Sahib as offering gets transubstantiated for Sikhs into *prasad*, i.e. a mark of Akal-Purakh's grace. *Karah Prasad* is thus the sacrament which is distributed among the *sangat* after *ardas* at all Sikh religious services and ceremonies. The word *karah* is derived from Sanskrit *katah* which means a large boiling pan, and what is cooked therein by the specific formula has, by transference of meaning, come to be called *karah*. In Sikh parlance, this communion food is also known by several other names such as *deg, tihaval* or *tribhavali* (lit. made of three ingredients of equal quantity, viz. ghee or clarified butter, wheat-flour and sugar) and *panchamrit* (most blessed sacrament). *Karah* is common to some other religious traditions as well. Muslims, who call it *halva*, prepare it in large quantities on the occasion of *Eid*. *Karah* was also offered among the ancient Aryans to the deities and idols as *lapasi*.

For *karah prasad* meant for offering at a Sikh assembly, its main ingredients, ghee, wheat-flour and sugar, must be weighed out in equal measures. The cooking-place or kitchen must be cleaned to ensure sanctity as well as hygienic standards, and a person cleanly dressed should be ready to take charge of the proceedings in the prescribed manner. Reciting the holy hymns, water, four times the weight of one of the ingredients, will be heated and sugar poured into it to dissolve and the mixture brought to boiling point in an open pan, called *karahi* or *karaha*, more ceremonially, *deg*; then ghee is heated and the wheat flour is fried and roasted brown in it. The syrup of sugar is then poured down into the pan and stirred. The preparation, properly made, will show ghee floating around the sweet substance. It is then transferred to some other pan, generally a

large salver, and is covered with a clean white piece of linen, and taken to the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib in *gurdwara* or site of the assembly, before the service is concluded with *ardas*. The *karah prasad* is touched with the tip of a *kirpan* or sword before it is distributed. Then, the *granthi*, or any other pious Sikh, puts in a saucer, the symbolic 'shares' of Panj Piare, i.e. the Five Beloved and distributes it among five *amritdhari* Sikhs of approved standing from among the assembly. After this, some volunteers, generally led by the *granthi*, distribute the holy sacrament among the *sangat*, without any distinction of status or caste. Every one, whatever his worldly position or station, must receive *prasad* while sitting on the floor, with both hands piously cupped. It is partaken of as a mark of receiving divine grace. This tradition of offering *karah prasad* in a *gurdwara* is traced back to Guru Arjan, who himself went to the Harimandar to offer *prasad* on certain occasions.

Ordinarily, *karah prasad* is prepared in the *gurdwara* itself, but people are free to prepare it, in the prescribed manner and with due care, at home and bring it to be offered at the *gurdwara*. In the larger *gurdwaras* which are under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, there are set counters from which readymade *karah prasad* is available on cash payment, generally in multiples of one and a quarter of a rupee. The devotees then carry it reverentially into the sanctuary.

The *deg* or *karah prasad* is compulsory offering at all Sikh ceremonies and observances. However, on less important occasions or if the devotee at whose instance the *divan* takes place cannot afford it, other and less expensive types of *prasad* can be offered. These substitutes are limited to four commodities, viz., *patasas* (sugar crystals),

gur (unclarified sugar), *phal* (fruit) and *makhanas* or *lachidana* (sugar plums). Other sweets are not ordinarily offered as *prasad*, but are not forbidden.

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T. S.

KARMA, THE DOCTRINE OF (**K. R. S. Iyenger**), closely connected with the theory of rebirth and transmigration, is basic to the religious traditions of Indian origin such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. The term *karam*, as it is spelt in Punjabi and as it occurs in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, has three connotations. As an inflection of Sanskrit *karman* from root *kri* (to do, perform, accomplish, make, cause or effect) it means an act, action, deed. It also stands for fate, destiny, predestination inasmuch as these result from one's actions or deeds. Also, *karam* as a word of Arabic origin is synonymous with *nadar* or Divine grace or clemency. It is with the first two connotations that the doctrine of karma is mainly concerned, although *karam* as God's grace is also relevant to the ultimate eradication of *karma* bringing *moksa* or liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

According to the law of *karma*, every action, physical or mental, has its own consequence which must be faced either in this life or in the lives to come. In the Indian religious traditions, the doctrine of *karma*, for this reason, is linked with the doctrines and processes of reincarnation and transmigration. Some western philosophers of yore also believed in transmigration, but for them it was associated with the concept of immortality of the soul. In Indian religious thought, on the other hand, transmigration is an essential concomitant of *karma*. It is to reap the consequence of his previous *karma* that an individual self (*jiva*) takes his next birth, but, in the very process of acting out this consequence, the *jiva* creates further chains of actions thus setting in motion an endless cycle of birth-action-death-rebirth. This has been described as the "karmic wheel" of alternating birth and death with fresh *karma* keeping the wheel in endless motion until the chain is broken through the annihilation of *karma*, and the *jiva* attains *moksa* (liberation

or release from transmigration). Different traditions within the Indian religious system recommend different means to break the *karmic* cycle ranging from austerities, renunciation and non-action to ritualism, philosophic knowledge, devotion and fruitful action.

The Gurus accepted the doctrine of *karma* not as an immutable law but as a system of Nature subject to *hukam* (Divine Order) and *nadar* (Divine grace)—two concepts which might be described as Guru Nanak's contribution to Indian religious thought. *Hukam*, a Persian term meaning command or decree, control or direction, sanction or permission, occurs in Guru Nanak's hymns in several different but related connotations such as Divine law, Divine will or Divine pleasure (*bhana, raza*); Divine fiat (*amar, farman*); Divine power or Divine creation (*qudarat*). *Nadar*, though justifiably translated as grace, is somewhat different from its usage in Christian theology where the stress is upon its universal nature and absolute sufficiency for salvation. In Sikhism, *nadar* is related to Divine pleasure (*raza*) and somewhat close to "election " of neo-Calvinist theology except that it leaves no scope for individual's free will.

The doctrine of *karma*, according to Sikh belief, is a part of the Divine law (*hukam*). "The whole universe," says Guru Arjan, Nanak V, "is bound by action, good or bad" (GG, 51). Guru Nanak declares in the *Japu* that "all forms, beings, greatness and lowliness, pain and pleasure, bounties and wanderings are subject to the indescribable *hukam* and there is nothing outside the realm of *hukam*," (GG, 1) and then adds that "*karma* determines the *kapra*, i.e. body or birth we receive and that it is through *nadar* (God's grace) that one secures the threshold of *moksa*" (GG, 2). Sikhism, moreover, distinguishes between *karma* and *kirat*. The latter term applies to the cumulative effect

of actions performed during successive births and is somewhat akin to *sanchit karma* and *prarabdh karma* of Hindu theoreticians. But the operation of *karma* in Sikhism is not irresistible; its adverse effects can be obliterated by a proper understanding of *hukam* and proper conduct in accordance with that understanding as well as by God's grace.

While the actions of other species are mostly regulated by instinctive response to environmental stimuli, man, endowed with a superior brain, is capable of having a proper understanding of *hukam* and choosing a course of actions (*karma*) favourable to progressive spiritual growth deserving His *nadar*. Human birth, therefore, is a precious gift and a rare chance for the individual soul (*jivatma*). Guru Nanak says: "Listen, listen to my advice, O my mind! Only good deeds shall endure, and there may not be a second chance." Certain points in the Sikh view of *karma* are noticeable. Sikhism does not stipulate heaven or hell wherein good and bad actions of men are rewarded or punished. Moreover, according to Sikhism, human birth is the result of God's will as well as of past actions. Further, past actions do not determine the caste or status of the *jiva* taking birth. All human beings are born equal.

What are "good" deeds (*sukrit*) that help man's quest for *moksa*, his ultimate aim? The Gurus deprecated self-mortification and non-action and pronounced ritualism as useless. They recommended a householder's life of activity and responsibility lived with humility, devotion and service guided by proper knowledge of *hukam* and submission to God's will (*raza*). Here Sikhism synthesizes the three paths to union with the Supreme soul, viz. *jnana marga, bhakti marga* and *karma marga*. A Sikh is called upon to seek *gian* (*jnana*), knowledge spiritual as well as secular, mundane and moral, practise *bhakti*, loving devotion, while leading a normal life of a *gurmukh* or one whose face is turned

towards the Guru. His actions (*karma*) guided by discernment that comes from *gian* and with the dedication and complete self-surrender of a *bhakta*, should be performed earnestly and honestly, doing full justice to his worldly duties. Yet he should not let himself be so much attached and entangled in the bonds of present life as to ignore the hereafter and to forget his ultimate goal which is reunion of his individual soul with its original source, the Supreme Spirit. Such disinterested actions help annihilate man's *haumai* (I-ness, ego) and, when blessed by God's *nadar* or *mihar*, he can overcome the effect of past *karma* and become *jivan-makta*, i.e. one liberated while still living.

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K. R. S.

KATHA (**Taran Singh**) is the noun form of the Sanskrit word *kath*, meaning to speak, describe, narrate or interpret. In religious terminology, *katha* stands for exposition, analysis and discussion of a passage from a scripture. It involves a full-length discourse on a given text, with a proper enunciation of it and elucidation with anecdotes, parables and quotations, of the underlying spiritual and theological doctrines and ideas. Since scriptural utterances and verses were generally pithy and aphoristic, they needed to be expounded for the laity and there emerged in the Indian tradition forms such as *tika* (paraphrase), *sabdartha* (gloss) and *bhasya* (commentary) with *pramanas* or suitable authoritative quotations from religious and didactic works to support the thesis or interpretation. These three modes of elucidation converge in the Sikh *katha* which is verbal in form. *Katha* of the Upanisads, the *Bhagavadgita* and Puranas and of the epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, has continued to be delivered from the rostrum. But in Sikhism it has become institutionalized as part of service at major religious assemblies.

The tradition of *katha* in Sikhism has its formal beginning in the time of Guru Arjan (1563-1606), who compiled the Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, and who is said to have ordained Bhai Gurdas, who had transcribed the Holy Volume, to expound briefly and precisely, daily a hymn which had been read from the Guru Granth Sahib. The *masands*, i.e. *sangat* leaders, appointed by the Gurus, started delivering *katha* in a like manner at local gatherings. Since *sabda* forms the essential base of Sikh spirituality and religion, correct interpretation of the sacred texts is of the utmost importance. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) is said to have himself instructed Bhai Mani Singh in the explication of the Holy Writ. From Bhai Mani Singh originates what is known as the

Giani school of interpretation of *gurbani*. The performance of *katha* has continued in the Sikh system over the centuries. There are numerous institutions, classical as well as modern, training scholars in the art. *Katha* is generally delivered in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. The *kathakar*, the performer, will in fact recite reverentially the hymn he proposes to expound from the Holy Book itself. The choice may have been premeditated or utterly impromptu. To describe the format, which certainly allows for variations, after a well-punctuated, clean, melodious and rhythmic recitation of the hymn, its central theme is brought into focus and explained. Then, the difficult words are explicated and verse-wise paraphrase of the entire *sabda* is given. Care is taken to sustain the context and point out the relevance of each verse to the main argument. This is followed by a thematic analysis of the hymn, bringing out its spiritual and doctrinal significance. Notice may also be taken of its literary graces. To support his interpretation, the *kathakar* quotes, all from memory, passages from the religious texts, and anecdotes from the lives of the Gurus. Before concluding the discourse, the argument is summed up and the original text recited again. At *katha* session in *gurdwaras* are also expounded major Sikh historical works such as *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* and *Panth Prakash*. But this happens generally in the afternoons, outside the morning and evening services.

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T. S.

KESADHARI (**Piara Singh Sambhi**), a term defining a Sikh as one who carries on his head the full growth of his *kes* (hair) which he never trims or cuts for any reason. Anyone, Sikh or non-Sikh, may keep the hair unshorn, but for the Sikh *kes*, unshorn hair, is an article of faith and an inviolable vow. The *Sikh Rahit Maryada* published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, statutory body for the control and management of Sikh shrines and by extension for laying down rules about Sikh belief and practice, issued in 1945, after long and minute deliberations among Sikh scholars and theologians, defines a Sikh thus:

> Every Sikh who has been admitted to the rites of *amrit*, i.e. who has been initiated as a Sikh, must allow his hair to grow to its full length. This also applies to those born of Sikh families but [who] have not yet received the rites of *amrit* of the tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh.

All codes and manuals defining Sikh conduct are unanimous in saying that uncut hair is obligatory for every Sikh. One of them, Bhai Chaupa Singh's, records, "The Guru's Sikh must protect the hair, comb it morning and evening and wash it with the curd. And he must not touch it with unclean hands."

Bhai Nand Lal quotes Guru Gobind Singh:

> My Sikh shall not use the razor. For him the use of razor or shaving the chin shall be as sinful as incest. . . For the Khalsa such a symbol is prescribed so that a Sikh cannot remain undistinguishable from among a hundred thousand Hindus or Muslims; because how can he hide himself with hair and turban on his head and with a flowing beard?

Bhai Desa Singh, in his *Rahitnama* imparts a theological edge to his statement:

> God created the whole universe and then he fashioned the human body. He gave men beard, moustaches and hair on the head. He who submits to His Will steadfastly adheres to them. They who deny His Will how will they find God in this world?

Trimming or shaving is forbidden the Sikhs and constitutes for them the direst apostasy. The truest wish of a true Sikh is to be able "to preserve the hair on his head to his last breath." This was the earnest prayer arising out of Sikh hearts in the days of cruel persecution in the eighteenth century when to be a Sikh meant to be under the penalty of death. The example is cited from those dark days of Bhai Taru Singh, the martyr, who disdainfully spurned all tempting offers of the Mughal persecutor if only he wouldconvert to Islam:

"How do I fear for my life? Why must I become a Musalman? Don't Musalmans die? Why should I abandon my faith? May my faith endure until my last hair—until my last breath," said Taru Singh.

The Nawab tried to tempt him with offers of lands and wealth. When he found Taru Singh inflexible, he decided to have his scalp scraped from his head. The barbers came with sharp lancets and slowly ripped Bhai Taru Singh's skull. He rejoiced that the hair of his head was still intact.

The importance of *kes* (Sikhs' unshorn hair) has been repeatedly demonstrated to them during their history. The hair has been their guarantee for self-preservation. Even more importantly, the prescription has a meaning for them far transcending the mundane frame of history.

A term which has had parallel usage in the Sikh system is Sahajdhari. A *sahajdhari* is not a full Sikh, but one on his way to becoming one. He is in the Guru's path, but has not yet adopted the full regalia of the faith. He fully subscribes to the philosophy of the Gurus; he does not own and believe in any other Guru or deity. His worship is the Sikh worship; only he has not yet adopted the full style of a Singh. Since he subscribed to no other form of worship or belief than the one prescribed for Sikhs, a concession was extended to him to call himself a Sikh—a *sahajdhari* Sikh, a gradualist who would gradually tread the path and eventually become a full-grown Khalsa. One venerable instance from among the contemporaries of Guru Gobind Singh, who introduced the order of the Khalsa, was Bhai Nand Lal, who composed beautiful poetry in honour of Guru Gobind Singh and who had the privilege even of laying down a code for the Sikhs.

The more recent Gurdwara enactment, passed by Indian Parliament in 1977, at the instance of Sikhs providing for the control and management of the Sikh places of worship in the territory of Delhi, apart from the Punjab, further tightened the definition of a Sikh and made it more explicit laying down "untrimmed hair" as an essential condition for him to be treated as a Sikh under the Act.

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P. S. S.

KHALSA (**Ganda Singh**), from Arabic *khalis* (lit. pure, unsullied) and Perso-Arabic *khalisah* (lit. pure; office of revenue department; lands directly under government management), is used collectively for the community of baptized Sikhs. The term *khalisah* was used during the Muslim rule in India for crownlands administered directly by the king without the mediation of *jagirdars* or *mansabdars*. In the Sikh tradition, the term appears for the first time in one of the *hukamnamas* (lit. written order or epistle) of Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) where a *sangat* of the eastern region has been described as *Guru ka Khalsa* (Guru's own or Guru's special charge). It has also been employed in the same sense in one of the letters of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) addressed to the *sangat* of Patna. The word occurs in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, once, but there it carries the sense of the term *khalis*, i.e. pure.

The term "Khalsa", however, acquired a specific connotation after Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) introduced, on 30 March 1699, the new form of initiatory rites— *khande di pahul* (rites by *khanda* or double-edged sword). Sikhs so initiated on that Baisakhi day were collectively designated as the Khalsa — Khalsa who belonged to Vahiguru, the Supreme Lord. The phrase *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa* became part of the Sikh salutation: *Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa*, *Vahiguru ji ki Fateh* (Hail the Khalsa who belongs to the Lord God! Hail the Lord God to whom belongs the victory!!) It is significant that shortly before the inauguration of the Khalsa Guru Gobind Singh had abolished the institution of *masands*, the Guru's agents or intermediaries assigned to *sangat*, of different regions, and his *hukamnamas* of the period confirm the derecognition of *masands*, establishing a direct relation between the *sangats* and the Guru. Sainapati, a poet enjoying the patronage of Guru Gobind Singh, in his *Sri Gur Sobha* relates how

some Sikhs, when questioned how they had become Khalsa because *khalsa* was a term related to the king of Delhi, replied that their Guru by removing his former *naibs* or deputies called *masands* had made all Sikhs his Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh, at the time of his departure from this mortal world, conferred guruship itself upon the Khalsa along with the holy Guru Granth Sahib. During the eighteenth century the volunteer force organized by the Sikhs was known as Dal Khalsa (lit. the Khalsa army). Even the government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) was called Sarkar-i-Khalsa. In Guru Gobind Singh's *Dasam Granth*, and in many later religious and historical Sikh texts, such as *Sarbloh Granth, Prem Sumarg Granth*, *Gur Bilases, Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* and *Prachin Panth Prakash*, the Khalsa is repeatedly extolled as composed of men of excellent moral qualities, spiritual fervour and heroism.

The words "Khalsa ji" are also used loosely for addressing an individual Singh or a group of them. However, it is more appropriate to use the term for the entire community or a representative gathering of it such as "Khalsa Panth" or "Sarbatt Khalsa." The Khalsa in this context implies the collective, spiritually-directed will of the community guided by the Guru Granth Sahib.

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G. S.

KIRTAN (**G. S. Talib**) (from Skt. *kirti*, i.e. to praise, celebrate or glorify), a commonly accepted mode of rendering devotion to God by singing His praises, is a necessary part of Sikh worship. Music plays a significant role in most religious traditions. In Sikhism it is valued as the highest form of expression of adoration and counts as the most efficacious means of linking the soul to the Divine Essence. *Kirtan* in the Indian tradition can be traced back to the Vedic chant in the second millennium B.C., the impulse behind it being the realization of the effect on the individual of joining the sound of music to the religious text. In Vedic rites, recitation was employed emphatically to bring out the meaning of the verses. *Kirtan* as we now understand it was popularized in medieval India by Vaisnava *bhaktas* and Sufi saints who sang usually their own compositions which not only produced in them a feeling of spiritual ecstasy but also led their followers into a mood of fervour. Jayadeva, a twelfth-century Bengali poet who composed the famous *Gita Govinda*, is generally considered to be the first in line, although centuries earlier Vaisnava poet-saints of South India, the Alvars, had earned much popularity with their devotional songs, called *Nalayira-divya-prabandham*. Along with the Vaisnavites of the Bhakti cult who sang lyrics about the sacred love of Krsna and Radha, appeared holy men of the Sant tradition like Jnanadeva (1275-1296) and Namdev (1270-1350), who addressed their songs and adoration to the Formless God. In Islam in India, Sufi mystics such as Shaikh Farid (1173-1265) composed and sang songs to express their longing for the Divine Being. The Vaisnavite saint Chaitanya (1485-1533) and his contemporary Sufi saints also popularized *sankirtana* and *qawwali*, respectively, as forms of group-singing.

Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, and the succeeding Gurus promulgated, besides repetition and contemplation of the Divine Name, *kirtan* as a form of worship. Guru Nanak in one of his verses thus figured forth the ecstasy of *kirtan*: "*Rag ratan paria parvar, tisu vichi upajai amritu sar*— music is a jewel born of the (supernatural) fairy family; from it rises the essence of nectar" (GG, 351). But warning men against the voluptuous indulgence in music, he said, "*Git rag ghan tal si kure, trihu gun upjai binsai dure, duji durmati dardu na jai, chhutai gurmukhi daru gun gai*—false are such songs, musical measures and the many rhythmic beats as bind one to the three modes of Maya, resulting in one's alienation from God. By wilfulness one does not annul suffering. They who follow the Guru's instruction are saved. The remedy lies in chanting God's praises" (GG, 832). Likewise, Guru Amar Das, Nanak III: "Singing of Raga Bilaval will become acceptable only when through it the holy Word finds utterance. Music and melody excel as they by the holy Word lead to concentration and serenity. Were one to devote oneself to serving the Divine, one would attain honour at the Lord's court even without having recourse to melody and music" (GG, 849). In Sikh *kirtan*, music, though an essential element, is subordinate to the holy Word. Musical embellishment and ornamentation are permitted, but what is of real essence is *gurbani* or the scriptural text. Technical virtuosity for its own sake will have little meaning.

Contents of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Book of the Sikhs, can alone be sung in Sikh *kirtan*, more accurately *sabda-kirtan*. The only other approved canon for this purpose is the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh which do not form part of the Guru Granth Sahib but are anthologized in a separate book, the *Dasam Granth*, and of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal. The text comprising the Guru Granth Sahib is

organized according to *ragas* or musical measures, 31 in number, with further variants in many of them, to which the hymns were composed. The Gurus themselves were well versed in music. At places in their hymns they have described themselves as "bards of the Lord." Guru Nanak kept with him as a constant companion a Muslim musician, Mardana, who played the *rabab* or rebeck as the Guru rendered the hymns composed by himself. Guru Arjan, who compiled the Guru Granth Sahib, was an accomplished musicologist, who is said to have designed a new string instrument, *saranda*, for use by *ragis* or performers of *kirtan*. The Gurus employed professional *rababis* (rebeck-players) and ragis (musicians) to perform *kirtan* in their presence. *Dhadis*, using small hand-drums called, *dhads* and a stringed instrument sang *vars* or ballads. Guru Arjan encouraged lay Sikhs to train as *kirtan*-singers. *Rababis* as a class of hereditary musicians were almost exclusively Muslims and groups of them continued to recite the sacred hymns inside Harimandar, the Golden Temple, until the partition of 1947 when they migrated to Pakistan. *Dhadi*-singers specialize in heroic balladry rather than in *sabda-kirtan*.

It is the *ragi* ensemble which now performs *kirtan* in *gurdwaras* and at congregations held on religious and festival occasions. Gurdwara music begins in the early hours of the morning. In the Harimandar at Amritsar, kirtan starts around 2 in the morning in summer months and around 3 in winter and is continued by a relay of *ragi jathas* or choirs till late in the evening. At other places, it may be intermittent or limited to morning and evening hours. Traditionally, there are four *chaukis* or services of *kirtan*. They are: (1) Asa ki Var at early morning; (2) Charan Kamal or Bilaval *chauki* in the forenoon (for 4 hours after sunrise); (3) Sodar *chauki* at sunset; and (4) Kalyan *chauki* in

the evening about an hour and a half after sunset. A *ragi jatha* commonly comprises three members —a lead singer nowadays usually playing the harmonium, a companion also at harmonium, and a *tabla* player (*tabla*, a pair of drums). The more elaborate ensembles may have one or more additional singers playing traditional string instruments such as *taus, tanpura* or *saranda*. The *ragis* sit on the ground or on a platform but always lower than, and usually to the left of where the Holy Book is seated. Smaller localities depend on local talent and simpler instruments such as a *dholaki*, a harmonium, cymbals and *chimta* (tongs fitted with jingling metallic discs). The performance follows the basic design of the classical tradition. Only permissible texts are rendered, with no extra words or syllables added. Every hymn is sung, as far as possible, in its correct *raga* and performed in appropriate *lai* (tempo), *sur* (melody), *tan* (tune) and *tal* (rhythm). The *kirtan* commences with an *alap* (long-drawn vocal tune) setting the pattern and tone of the music. The tempo is slow and words are pronounced in a mood of reverence and devotion. The refrain is presented in the first place by the lead singer and is repeated in chorus by the other *ragis*. Then the harmoniums and/or string instruments repeat the tune to be followed by a vocal recitation. *Raga* phrases may be presented in their entirety or divided to suit the text and the tune. In either case, the phrase will end with a chorus. Interludes in the development section, i.e. melodic material from both *sthai* (refrain) and *antara* (crescendo), may occasionally be done by *tabla* alone or sung with a vowel sound to the same melody instead of a repetition by a reed or string instrument. If a full classical development of a *raga* is not attempted, a lighter classical style may be employed, especially for *slokas* and *pauris* of a *var*. Explanatory or amplificatory passages, again out of permissible texts alone, may be inserted in the main composition

and presented in a related *raga* or in a recitative musical style. The lead singer generally introduces all new texts and musical material but the others may join in during the latter part of the phrase.

Sabda-kirtan has some limitations placed upon it traditionally in order that the religious structure of the performance is not compromised. In no case must the holy text be garbled, not even for musical effect. Every single word must be accurately pronounced. The message must reach the listener through clearly enunciated words. Hymns should be sung with affirmation in a full voice. *Gamaks* or musical ornaments should be limited to those essential to the correct performance of a *raga* such as glides between notes to maintain a connected melodic line. However, creative faculties of the performers should not be inhibited. Hand gestures, clapping and dancing are prohibited. No appreciation may be shown to the *ragis* during the performance.

The *Sikh Rahit Maryada* or code of conduct published under the authority of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, statutorily elected religious body of the Sikhs, defines *kirtan* as rendition of gurbani or Scriptural texts in (appropriate) *ragas*. For illustration, verses from Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal could be used. Even when singing the hymns in open religious tunes, i.e. when they are not being rendered by the *ragi* ensemble in prescribed *ragas*, with the entire congregation participating or forming an alternate chorus, the purity of line and phrase has to be maintained, eschewing additional words or syllables. Only a line from the hymn in question may be used as the refrain.

Combining discourse with *kirtan* is sometimes resorted to generally by the lead *ragi*, but it is not favoured by connoisseurs of music, or by lovers of *gurbani* who prefer

nirol, i.e. unadulterated *sabda kirtan*. Lately, *kirtan darbars*, continuous sessions in which several choir groups take turns at singing Sikh hymns, *akhand* (uninterrupted) *kirtan* or *rain sabai* (night-long) *kirtan* have come into vogue. They not only cater to the aesthetic and spiritual needs of the devotees, but also help widen the scope and appeal of Sikh *kirtan*.

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G. S. T.

KRODH (**L. M. Joshi**)(Skt. *krodha*) or wrath is an emotion recognized in the Sikh system as a spring of conation and is as such counted as one of the Five Evils. It expresses itself in several forms from silent sullenness to hysterical tantrums and violence. In Sikh Scripture *krodh* usually appears in combination with *kam*—as *kam krodh*. The coalescence is not simply for the sake of alliterative effect. *Krodh* (ire) is the direct progeny of *kam* (desire). The latter when thwarted or jilted produces the former. The Scripture also counts *krodh* (or its synonym *kop*) among the four rivers of fire. Violence, attachment, covetousness and wrath," says Guru Nanak "are like four rivers of fire; those who fall in them burn, and can swim across, O Nanak, only through God's grace" (GG, 147). Elsewhere he says, "*Kam* and *krodh* dissolve the body as borax melts gold" (GG, 932). Guru Arjan, Nanak V, censures *krodh* in these words: "O *krodh,* thou enslavest sinful men and then caperest around them like an ape. In thy company men become base and are punished variously by Death's messengers. The Merciful God, the Eradicator of the sufferings of the humble, O Nanak, alone saveth all" (GG, 1358). Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, warns: "Do not go near those who are possessed by wrath uncontrollable' (GG, 40). *Krodh* is to be vanquished and eradicated. This is done through humility and firm faith in the Divine. Guru Arjan's prescription: "Do not be angry with any one; search your own self and live in the world with humility. Thus, O Nanak, you may go across (the ocean of existence) under God's grace" (GG, 259). Shaikh Farid, a thirteenth-century Muslim saint whose compositions are preserved in the Sikh Scripture, says in one of his couplets: "O Farid, do good to him who hath done thee evil and do not nurse anger in thy heart; no disease will then afflict thy body and all felicities shall be thine" (GG, 1381-82). Righteous indignation against evil, injustice

and tyranny is, however, not to be equated with *krodh* as an undesirable passion. Several hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib, particularly those by Guru Nanak and Kabir, express in strong terms their disapproval of the corruption of their day.

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L.M. J.

LAVAN (**Dharam Singh**) is the title traditionally given a short four-stanza composition by Guru Ram Das under *raga* Suhi (p. 773) in the Guru Granth Sahib. The word *lavan*, in the Indian tradition, also stands for the marriage ceremony: in Hindu society the couple reverentially circumambulates the holy fire to the singing of holy hymns from Hindu scriptures. Among Sikhs the couple circumambulates the Guru Granth Sahib, completing a circuiting as each of the quartets of *Lavan* is being sung or intoned (see ANAND KARAJ).

In the Sikh canonical literature the human soul is likened to a bride whose marriage (union) with Lord-husband is the ultimate end of human life. The very first *lav* (singular of *lavan*) with which begin the marriage rites is the Lord's ordinance showing the way for leading a happy wedded life. The two-fold emphasis here requires man to be ever absorbed in the Divine Name and to hold fast to his moral and social obligations. This endeavour for simultaneous perfection in spiritual as well as social spheres is required to move successfully towards the goal of *mukti*, the ultimate end of human life.

The second quartet (the couple makes the second circumambulation as the verse is being sung) tells man that his earlier endeavour is rewarded in the meeting of the True Guru. As a result of this, the human heart becomes free of all fears and all the filth of selfishness is washed off his mind. Ever in the presence of God, he sings His praises. He realizes that all beings are, in essence, manifestations of the Divine who pervades within and without.

The third quartet advises man to cultivate in his heart love of the Lord and detach himself from the mundane world. Company of the good and the holy is declared to be

auspicious. It is in the holy congregation that glory of the Ineffable lord is sung. And it is to singing of His praise that man must dedicate himself.

The fourth quartet shows the human mind unlocking the Divine mystery. Man achieves mystical union with the Absolute One. This union results in indescribable bliss for the *jiva*-bride and all desires of 'her' heart are fulfilled.

The four quartets of the hymn depict the four stages of human consciousness seeking realization. It begins in man's endeavour simultaneously to advance on the spiritual and social planes (1). To achieve this man is advised to live under the guidance of the Guru. It is under the Guru's guidance (2) that man will be led to cultivating in his mind an intense longing for the Lord and detachment from the world. He now revels in the company of the good and the holy (3). As love for the Divine is awakened in the human heart and man's grip on human values of life tightens, he gains proximity to the Divine and becomes one with Him (4). Thus, the religious ceremony of *lavan* begins with man's quest for God-realization and concludes with the attainment of this ideal.

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D. S.

MAN (**J. S. Neki**) or *mana*, from Skt. *manas (*mind or psyche), is one of the major operational concepts in Indian thought involved in the process of apprehending facts and reacting to situations and stimuli, as also the cause of *bandh* (bondage/attachment). 'Mind' is the nearest English rendering of '*man*', though the two are not perfectly synonymous. Whereas 'mind' is a comprehensive term subsuming all mental functions, *man* has a narrower connotation in that its functions mainly relate to (i) the *indris* (sense organs and motor organs) and (ii) emotions, such as *sukh* (pleasure) and *dukh* (pain), *hit* (good) and *ahit* (bad), grief and anger.

Numerous terms have, almost interchangeably, been used in *gurbani* for *man*. These include *chit* (seat of consciousness), *hirda*, *hia* or *hiara* (lit. the heart), *jia* or *jio* (lit. life principle), and *mati* (intellect). *Chit* seems to have a wider connotation embracing consciousness, awareness, perception, cognition, memory and thinking. *Hirda* and its synonyms denote, in particular, the emotive states of the mind. *Jia* or *jio*, as in *sahasai jiu malinu hai*, doubt pollutes the mind (GG, 919), is symbolic of *man*. *Mati* (intellect, counsel) though considered distinct from *man*, as in *tithai ghariai surti mati mani budh* (GG, 8), at times seems to denote *man* itself, as in *mati vichi ratan javahar manik* (GG, 2). As a specific term, *man* refers to its initial contact with *visha* (object), i.e. perception. In a given *kriya* (act or process), *man* is called *smriti* at the level of recall, buddh(i) at the level of deliberation and decision, and *drirhta* in the moderation of the act or resoluteness.

Two divergent views are found in the Indian philosophical thought regarding the nature of *man* (*manas*). One view considers it to be an evolute of the five elements (*panchbhuta*), whereas the other holds it to be non-*panchbhutik* (non-material). Both

these views find expression in *gurbani*. The assertion *ihu manu panch tatu te janama*—this mind has evolved from the five material elements (GG, 415), alludes to its material origins. What it signifies, in reality, is that *man* comes into being only when pure consciousness or *atma* comes in contact with the material body. On the other hand, statements such as *man tun joti sarup hai*—O man, you are of the nature of light, i.e. consciousness (GG, 441), proclaim it to be non-*panchbhutik*. However, in essence, a statement of this nature only signifies that *man* does not come into being unless the material body is inhabited by conscious *atma*, which is the real *karta* (doer) and *bhogta* (experiencer). These two positions are only apparently antithetical. *Man*, in fact, is the joint product of sentient *atma* and the insentient body. It has also been looked upon as the yoking principle between *atma* and *sharir* (physical body).

Outward pursuit is the usual occupation of *man*. Through the five sense organs (*gian indris*) it receives impressions from the external world, and through the agency of the five organs of action (*karma indris*) it operates upon it. Thus, it is at once the perceiver of the environment as well as the inspirer and director of man's conscious activity. Impelled by its material source, the mind or *man* serves the ends of the physical body, protecting and nurturing it, and devising for its relishes (*ras sarir ke*) and enjoyments (*bhog*). Yet, it is not entirely material in its make-up. It is able to discriminate between good (*hit*) and bad (*ahit*) and so become its own critic. That is why *man* has been called *karma* (the doer) as well as *dharma* (the valuer)—*ihu manu karma*, *ihu manu dharma* (GG, 415).

In its outward material pursuits, it is less conscious (*giata*) and more ignorant (*agiani*); less sentient (*chetan*) and more stupid (*murh*); less discriminative (*bibeki*) and

more stolid (*jar*), and prone to be misled by illusion or sense of individuation (*maya*). Over-brimming with egoism (*haumai*), it runs outwards to annex to itself things and relations in greedy pursuits. Shuffling continually between hopes (asa) and desires (*manasa*), it is fickle and scattered. Tossed about by doubt (*sansa*) and delusion (*bharam*), it is restless (*ashant*). Agitated by anxious concerns (*chinta*), it lives in continual fear and anxiety. Bounced by craving (*rag*) and aversion (*dvesh*), it is inconstant and capricious. At times, it rises to the heavens; at times it sinks to the Hades: *kabahu jiara ubhi charatu hai kabahu jai paiale* (GG, 876). The infinite series of mental activities (*birtis*) spell its protean nature. Its counsel (*manmat*) is generally base and demeaning. Heeding it, one becomes a self-willed, self-opinionated and ego-centred individual (*manmukh*).

If, however, under the guru's instruction (*gurmat*), this mind, *man*, were to withdraw from its outward pursuit and become at home with itself, it will overcome all the disturbances caused by the external world, and it will merge with the mighty deep of the *atma* lying within it. It is thus that it discovers itself as pure consciousness, aware of nothing but its own self. It is only then that all ignorance is shed from *man* and it stands illumined by its own inner light. All conditioning disappears; all the fetters fall off. *Man* becomes conversant with its own renascent resplendence. Guru Ram Das likens the mind in its purity to the innocent baby residing in the township of the body (GG,1191).

Such withdrawal from without, this return home occurring at the guru's bidding, makes one a God-centered or Guru-oriented (*gurmukh*) individual. Virtuous deeds performed under the direction of the spiritual mentor enable him to realize the true essence of the self.

Evidently, a basic conflict inheres in *man*—that between its outward inclinations and its inward retreat and immersion in its own self. The former tendency is amorously passionate; furiously aggressive, covetously possessive, blindly infatuative, and proudly egoistic (characterized by the five base emotions, viz. lust, anger, greed, attachment and egotism). The feverishness of this pursuit causes the *man* to remain in continual turbulence and suffering in the *karmic* whirl of birth and death.

The path of deliverance as revealed by the Guru is for the *man* to abandon its outward pursuits and immerse itself in blissful contemplation. "Quell the noise and experience beauty." The goal of all spiritual discipline is to attain this sublime quietude, controlling the mind's distractions. This is the state of the emancipated individual, the *gurmukh* or the *jivan-makta*, who freely moves between the realm of duty in the worldly life and realm of devotion to the spirit eternal. He is the one in tune with the Infinite.

The ideal state of the mind (*man*) is that which leads to the dissolution of *man*, the death of *man*. But who would slay *man*? *Man* itself, says the Guru, *Nanak, man hi kau manu marsi* (GG,1089). And this is the greatest ever victory, equalling victory over the whole world: *mani jitai jagu jitu* (GG, 6) —conquering the *man* (mind) amounts to conquering the world.

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J. S. N.

MANMUKH (**J. S. Neki**), the ego-guided person, as opposed to *gurmukh* who is Guru-guided. The *gurmukh-manmukh* bipolarity represents the personality typology employed in the Sikh sacred literature. Basically it opposes and contrasts theocentric and egocentric personality types. The word *manmukh* is compounded of *man* (mind, lower self and *mukh* (face): thus one who has his face towards his own mind or ego is egocentric. "The *gurmukh* keeps his face towards the Guru for guidance while the *manmukh* turns away from him—*gurmukhi sanmukhu manmukhi vemukhia*" (GG, 131). Thus is a *manmukh* characterized in another verse: "This is of the nature of a *manmukh* that he cherishes not (the Lord's) Name and reflects not on (His) Word" (GG, 509). While the *gurmukh* ever lives in the presence of God, the *manmukh* remains oblivious of Him. "The *manmukh* depends upon his own intelligence and calculations (not realizing that) whatever happens is by God's Will—*manmukhi ganat ganavani karata kare su hoi*" (GG, 60). His own calculations put him into *karmic* bondage, for he becomes a slave to his own impulses. Anger and avarice, lust and delusion, arrogance and passion tighten their grip on him. He obeys his own impulses refusing to reckon any law outside of himself. He never cares to listen to the word of the Guru or the advice of the holy. "He is lost in the wilderness of his own delusions and passions—*manmukhi bharami bhavai bebani*" (GG, 941). Forgetting the Giver, that is God, he chases material goods all the time. The longer he remains under the sway of his baser self (*man*), the farther he drifts from God's grace. The *manmukh* is compared to a stone which, even if kept in water for long, remains unsoaked at heart: "*manmukh patharu sailu hai dhrigu jivanu phika. jal mahi keta rakhiai abh antari suka*" (GG, 419). He allows his senses to be ruled by his passions: his egoity stands between him and the Lord.

Guru Nanak applied the term *manmukh* to those persons who were ego-ridden materialistic, and hypocritical. They pose to be religious, but are in reality proud and evil-minded. His successor-Gurus, besides the above typology, applied the term to persons who calumniated the Guru, opposed his teachings and doctrines and kept away from the *sangat* (fellowship of the holy). Bhai Gurdas had the Gurus' calumniators in mind when he discoursed on *manmukhs* in his *Vars*. After the institution of the Khalsa, those *kesadharis* who did not receive *pahul* were, in a sense, considered to be *manmukhs* like those who took *pahul* but then did not abide by stipulated conduct. Apart from this latter-day usage, the term in its original conceptual signification refers to one who believes in duality (*dvaitbhava*) and who led by his self-will refuses the Guru's guidance and wantonly indulges his impulses. He loves the gifts but forgets the Giver.

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J. S. N.

MARTYRDOM (**G. S. Talib**) or voluntarily laying down of one's life for one's faith or principles, considered a noble death in any society, is especially prized in Sikhism which has a long and continuous tradition of such adherence to religious belief and sacrifice for it. Etymologically, "martyr" is derived from the Greek *martys* meaning "witness." Significantly, the Punjabi word for martyrdom, *shahadat*, borrowed from Arabic, also means testimony or affirmation. Thus, a *shahid* or martyr is one who by his supreme sacrifice for his faith bears witness to its truth, and to his own unswerving allegiance to it. In a world in which bigots and tyrants have often tried to impose their will on others aiming to deflect them from the path held by them to be the right one, the situation for the enactment of the high tragedy of martyrdom has been constantly recurring. Martyrs have ever since the dawn of history been providing inspiration, sustenance, strength and a self-regenerative force to their respective faiths and sense of honour and pride to their followers.

A martyr is generally defined as one who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce his or her faith. Physical death according to Christian thought is not essential to martyrdom. According to Saint Jerome (AD *c*. 340-420), "it is not only the shedding of blood that is accounted as a confession. The spotless service of a devout mind is itself a daily martyrdom." Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225?-74), scholastic philosopher and theologian, too, considers that on the physical plane "martyrdom consists in the right endurance of suffering unjustly inflicted." In Islam all believers who die fighting against the infidels are believed to have attained martyrdom. In the Sikh conception of the term, however, a deliberate choice to suffer death for the sake of religious belief is crucial to martyrdom. Heroism and martyrdom both involve exemplary courage, but the courage in

a martyr is more deep-rooted, more moral than physical, and is born out of spiritual conviction rather than love of worldly gain or glory.

In the ancient world the records of tyranny and the idealistic resistance to it have generally been incomplete or mixed up with much mythological matter. The result of this has been that the clear picture of the episodes of martyrdom, the relevant factors in the situation, the ideals cherished and the full emotional significance of the sacrifice have been brought out only in historical times when fairly reliable and detailed accounts of the act have been recorded by sympathetic and imaginative witnesses. Given such witnesses, what would ordinarily be viewed as mere incidents of death and brutality take on the character of the upholding of cherished ideals to death in the eye of a power held to be divine whose higher purposes are fulfilled through the tragic conflict represented in the act of self-immolation involved in martyrdom.

In the Muslim tradition the parallel term for martyr is *shahid* which, again, signifies witness. Both in classical Greek and Arabic the formulation of these parallel terms, each of which is built round the same image, would indicate the history of the moral and spiritual struggle of races and tribes sharing common cultural traditions in the lands inhabited by the races known as the Semitic. While the Greek writers' mind would be deeply influenced by the sufferings of the Jewish people at the hands of Egyptians, Babylonians and such others, and, later, the story of Jesus' sacrifice, the Muslims had, besides, their own celebrated martyrs among the Prophet's followers and descendants, led by his grandson, Imam Husain. It is from the Muslim tradition that the term *shahid* came into India and, like so much else from the Muslim cultural background, got acclimatized in the social milieu of the Sikh people in a manner as to acquire a new and extended

significance among them because of the peculiar turns the history of the Sikh people took since quite an early period in the growth of their Church. All the classical elements of the phenomenon of martyrdom have been present in the religious history of the Sikh people in a remarkable degree. It is doubtful if before the Sikhs' use of this term in India, any other non-Muslim people had adopted it. After the currency which this term got at the hands of the Sikhs, it became common coin in referring to the sacrifices of all those who fell while serving their faith, or in the patriotic struggle against British rule in their country.

Sikhism began in early sixteenth century as a religious brotherhood open to all, irrespective of caste, colour or race. The Sikhs did not come of a single ethnic stock, yet a spirit of sacrifice and readiness to stand up to tyranny and injustice emerged as their common racial trait. During the eighteenth century when the ruling powers and foreign invaders launched a ruthless campaign against them, they matched the situation with courage and fortitude and with unparalleled deeds of heroism and sacrifice. To die for their faith and for their Guru had become their ruling impulse. As says the *Prachin Panth Prakash*, "Sikhs had a fondness for death. To court death they had now found the opportunity. Their lives they held not dear. They did not feel the pain if their bodies were slashed. . . To martyrdom are we wedded. We turn not our backs upon it, sang the Sikhs."

To quote again the *Prachin Panth Prakash*, "Once Nadir asked Zakariya Khan, 'Tell me who these raiders are. They who plunder my highways. I shall reduce their country to ashes.' The Nawab answered, 'Their country is nowhere marked. They get their sleep not in villages. They know not the taste of salt or *ghee*. We torment them, yet

they flourish. Long summer days they pass without water. In winter they get no fire to warm themselves. They do not have access to ground corn to eat. They run to fight. One battles like a hundred. Death they fear not. Devoutly they cherish to die for their faith. We have become tired of killing them, but they are far from finished.' Nadir further queried: 'Whose followers are they? Who is their prophet? Or, are they sprung without any spiritual direction?' 'To Guru Nanak they owe their origin,' said Zakariya Khan."

Just to prove to the world that the Sikhs had not been annihilated or vanquished, one Bota Singh stood in the most important highway in the Punjab, club in hand, levying a tax on all passersby. Finding that everybody was tamely submitting to this demand, he sent a letter to the governor of Lahore himself. The latter despatched a body of soldiers to overpower him. Bota Singh, along with his companion, Garja Singh, fell fighting valiantly. This happened in 1739.

There were innumerable other instances of such pure and defiant heroism and martyrdom. Thus does the *Prachin Panth Prakash* narrate the story of Bhai Taru Singh: "Once the governor of Lahore asked his men, 'From where do the Sikhs obtain their nourishment? I have debarred them from all occupations. They realize no taxes. They do not farm, nor are they allowed to do business or join public employment. I have stopped all offerings to their sacred places. No provisions or supplies are accessible to them. Why do they not die of sheer starvation? My troops bar their way. They search for them and they kill them where they see them. I have burnt down entire villages with Sikh populations. I have destroyed their remotest kin. I have ferreted them out of the holes and slaughtered them. The Mughals are hawks; the Sikhs are like quail. Vast

numbers of them have been ensnared and killed. No one can live without food. I know not how the Sikhs survive without it?'"

"Harbhagat Niranjania, who was a sworn foe of the Sikhs, answered, 'There are Sikhs in this world who would not eat until they have fed their brethren. They may themselves go without clothes and food, but cannot bear their comrades' distress. They will pass the cold season by fireside and send them their own clothes. Some will sweat to grind corn and have it sent to them. They will do the roughest chores to earn a small wage for their sake. They migrate to distant places to eke out money for their brothers in exile.'"

"The Nawab shook his head in despair, 'They are unyielding people indeed. Their annihilation is beyond our power, God alone will destroy them.' Harbhagat Niranjania spoke again, 'In the village of Puhla, in Majha, lives one Taru Singh. He tills his land and pays the revenue to the official. He eats but little and sends what he saves to his brothers in the jungles. He has his mother and sister who both toil and grind to make a living. They eat sparingly and they wear the coarsest homespun. Whatever they save, they pass on to the Sikhs. Besides the Sikhs, they own none other. They recite the hymns of their Gurus. Death they do not dread. They visit not the Ganga or the Yamuna. They bathe in the tank constructed by their own Guru.'"

An officer was immediately sent with soldiers to apprehend Taru Singh. Taru Singh was captured and brought to Lahore. He was thrown into jail where he was given many tortures. But, says the *Prachin Panth Prakash*, "as the Turks tormented Taru Singh, ruddier became his cheeks with joy. As he was starved of food and drink, contentment reigned on his face. He was happy in the Guru's will."

Eventually, Taru Singh was presented before the Nawab who spoke: “If you become a Musalman, then alone will I remit your life.”

“How do I fear for my life? Why must I become a Musalman? Do not Musalmans die? Why should I abandon my faith? May my faith endure until my last hair—until my last breath,” said Taru Singh. The Nawab tried to tempt him with offers of lands and wealth. When he found Taru Singh inflexible, he decided to have his scalp scraped off his head. The barbers came with sharp lancets and slowly ripped Bhai Taru Singh’s skull. He rejoiced that the hair of his head, sacred for a Sikh, was still intact. Bhai Taru Singh’s martyrdom took place on 1 July 1745.

Facing persecution of the fiercest character, the Sikhs took from the Muslim tradition the very term *shahid* to designate such of their brethren as had earned the honour so to be described. So great was the impact on the Sikh mind of the mass martyrdom undergone by the noblest and the best among them that one of their twelve *misls* or federating clans came to be known as Misl Shahidan (the Clan of the Martyrs). This *misl* was so named because of the celebrated leader, Baba Dip Singh Shahid, who fell a martyr in 1757 defending the holy Harimandar at Amritsar. Since those times the term *shahid* has become in a special way a part of the Sikh vocabulary to signify fidelity to one's faith in a manner in which no other non-Muslim group in India or elsewhere has adopted it. Prior to this period in the eighteenth century, the term must already have gained wide currency among the Sikhs. Since then and after, it has been applied to all those who wore the crown of martyrdom within the faith, from Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur and those who suffered death along with him to the hundreds of thousands

who in the course of the eighteenth century and after met their end while defending the faith.

To recall the sacrifices of the martyrs throughout the course of Sikh history is a part of the Sikh tradition while offering *ardas* or the daily supplicatory prayer morning and evening and, as a matter of fact, at all times, *Shahids* are in this context mentioned along with the faithful followers (*murids*) of the holy Gurus. The details of the persecution suffered by them are recalled on these occasions, such as being sawn alive, boiled to death, broken on the wheel, having themselves flayed alive and suffering such other tortures. The sacrifices of the women who, under the Mughal governors of Lahore were martyred, who had to grind loads of corn in captivity and who had their infants killed before their eyes, are recalled too. Among the supreme martyrs mentioned are Guru Gobind Singh's four sons (*sahibzade*). The phenomenon of martyrdom and the term *shahid* are thus an integral part of the Sikh tradition.

To mention some post-eighteenth century portions of Sikh history, the term *shahid* is applied for example to the Kuka (Namdhari) crusaders hanged or blown away from guns at Malerkotla in 1872. It is applied to those who braved British bullets in the *Komagata Maru* episode of 1914-15, while asserting their right to live as equal citizens along with the whites in the British Empire. Their objectives were, as is well known, revolutionary. This was the first time that the term *shahid* was applied to those engaged in a political struggle. Not long after, all who died while attempting to free Nankana Sahib, birthplace of Guru Nanak, from the corrupt hereditary priests in the general struggle for the reformation of the management of the Sikh shrines were designated as *shahids*. Since then the term has been in very wide vogue, and has overstepped its earlier

religious associations to cover all who made the supreme sacrifice in pursuit of some socially approved ideal.

In Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, clearly expressed injunctions to the true devotee are found not to shrink from making the supreme sacrifice in a holy cause. Guru Nanak, in the text known as *Alahnia* (Dirges) expressing with deep compassion thoughts on death, makes a transition into moral idealism when he declares:

Men! revile not Death:

Death is not an evil, should one know how truly to die.

The death of heroic men is holy,

Should they lay down their lives for a righteous cause. (GG, 579)

This is truly a call to mankind not to shirk from sacrificing life in pursuit of a worthy cause. Guru Nanak in another context offers, through the symbolism of sport, the same exhortation:

Shouldst thou be eager to join the game of love,

Enter my street with thy head placed on thy palm:

Stepping on to this path,

Sacrifice thy head without demur. (GG, 1412)

Kabir, whose compositions are preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib, portrays thus the spirit of heroism:

The sky-resounding kettle-drum is sounded:

The heart is pierced with the passion for righteousness.

The hero, entering the field,

Fights on without flinching;

Know that man to be a true hero who fights in defence of the defenceless;

Hacked limb by limb, he still flees not the field. (GG, 1105)

Guru Gobind Singh, in a prayer addressed to the Lord, seeks the boon of laying down life on the field of battle, fighting to defend righteousness:

Lord! grant me this boon:

May I never turn my back on the right path;

May I never turn my back in fear when face to face with the foe;

May I ever direct my mind to chanting Thy praises;

And when the end arrives,

May I fall fighting squarely on the field of battle (*Chandi Charitra*, 231)

Another text glorifying the spirit of martyrdom occurs at the close of the epic "Krishnavatar" in the *Dasam Granth*:

Blessed be he whose tongue lauds God,

and who in his mind contemplates holy war.

This perishable frame shall not last;

Let man through sacrifice sail in the ship of glory

And thereby swim across the ocean of the world.

His body the home of spiritual poise

His mind aglow like a lamp lit;

With the broom of God-realization

Should he sweep away the dust-heap of cowardice.

The twin supreme martyrdoms in the Sikh tradition are Guru Arjan's (1606) and Guru Tegh Bahadur's (1675). Few details of Guru Arjan's sacrifice have been preserved

for us, except the general account of the tortures inflicted on him, such as putting him in a cauldron of boiled water and pouring parched sand over his body. The brief account in Jahangir's *Tuzak* (Memoirs) leaves no doubt as to the torture (*yasa*) and execution (*siyasat*) he underwent. The Guru was offered the choice between accepting Islam and death. He spurned the alternative of turning a renegade to his own spiritual convictions, and chose the alternative of a painful death inflicted in the traditions of the code of Chingez Khan. For a glimpse of the Guru's spiritual state, besides the account in *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* of Bhai Santokh Singh, we have the noble stanza in Bhai Gurdas' *Varan*. Santokh Singh's account sets down Guru Arjan as listening to holy music by a minstrel who came seeking him near the place of his martyrdom at Lahore. Transcending the pain and suffering, the Guru rendered his life to God in perfect peace of the spirit. The stanza by Bhai Gurdas opening the line, *rahide Guru dariau vichi min kulin hetu nirbani*, is cryptic and symbolic, yet invaluable as depicting the state of Guru Arjan's soul. An English rendering is given below:

As creatures of water are one with the waves of the river.

So was the Guru immersed in the River that is the Lord;

As merges the moth at sight into the flame.

So was the Guru's light merged into Light Divine.

In the extremest hours of suffering nothing entered his mind except the Divine Lord.

Like the deer who hears no sound but the hunter's drum,

Like the bee wrapped inside the lotus,

Passed he the night of this life as in a casket of joy;

Never did he forget to utter the Lord's Word

Even as the Chatrik fails never to utter his cry;

To a man of God joy is the fruit of devotion

And meditation in holy company.

May I be a sacrifice unto the holy Guru Arjan! (*Varan*, XXIV. 23)

In respect of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the accounts, though still far from full, are more detailed than about Guru Arjan. Details of Aurangzib's religious policy of the suppression of non-Muslims have come down through several sources, thus placing Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice in the centre as the defence primarily of the right of the Hindu population to the practice of their faith. The accounts of the Guru's arrest on two different occasions only confirm the popular view that he was looked upon by the Mughal court as one whose teaching strengthened among the people the resolve to face hardships and death rather than renounce their faith under coercion. Guru Tegh Bahadur thus defended *dharma*, which is righteousness, under a regime which had taken to the path of oppression and tyranny. He stood for those values and decencies which the soul of India has evolved and cherished for millennia, and which are some of the noblest ideals held by humanity. His sacrifice, therefore, was for a cause than which none could be higher.

Besides the accounts of the Guru's arrests, his journeys in the Punjab, Haryana and areas to the east, the invaluable testimony of *Bachitra Natak*, the autobiographical fragment by Guru Gobind Singh, is there to depict the spirit and essence of this sacrifice. By the side of this scriptural testimony, all speculations of historians and all research based on partial and prejudiced sources loses its value. This testimony, eloquent though

terse, embodies within a few lines a whole heroic epic. It may be reproduced here in an English rendering:

The Lord protected the sacred mark on their forehead and the holy thread around the neck.

And in Kali-yuga performed a mighty deed.

To defend those who were in the right he spared himself no sacrifice;

He gave away his head, but uttered not a groan.

In order to uphold the truth he enacted this great deed;

He sacrificed his life, but did not resile from his ideal.

He spurned the exhibition of theatrical acts of miracle-mongering,

Such as would shame devotees of God.

Breaking the frame of his body on the head of the monarch of Delhi, he departed for realm celestial;

None ever performed a noble deed like Tegh Bahadur's.

At Tegh Bahadur's departure the world was plunged in grief:

The world below wailed,

But the heaven above sang songs of glory.

Into the last acts both of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur may be seen the culmination of lives whose every moment had been a living martyrdom, to live for God and man, to serve and to spread the light of truth. To the martyr his sacrifice is an act of God to be accepted in the spirit of the fullest resignation. Should God design his life for fulfilment in the way of living out his days in action, he follows that in the spirit of perfect poise. Should it please Him to send him pain and death, that is no less willingly

accepted. It is by such aptitude that the martyr's life stirs great changes in societies and nations. His example becomes the source of inspiration for others to mould their own lives on a similar model.

While the essence of the teaching of Sikhism in relation to life-experience is transcendence of suffering through perfect resignation, this spirit is expressed in greater detail with a deeper power to touch the mind in Guru Arjan's *bani* or sacred Word. As one contemplates his teaching, one feels as though his spirit, in its prophetic moments, felt the suffering that was, through the inscrutable working of the Divine Law, to be his portion. And in his sacred Word is an expression of the spirit that lays pain and suffering aside, and as in the poem of Bhai Gurdas mentioned earlier, despite suffering "his life was passed as in a casket of joy." Says Guru Arjan:

> Under the protection of the Lord not a single breath of hot air shall touch me;
>
> I am begirt by the miraculous protective Arc of Rama.
>
> Suffering fails to penetrate to me. (GG, 819)
>
> Whatsoever be Thy will, Lord, is sweet to me;
>
> All I crave is the wealth of Thy Name. (GG, 394)

The same spirit pervades Guru Tegh Bahadur's teaching. One out of a number of instances may be given here, of the expression of the spirit of resignation, spiritual poise and merging of the spirit into the Divine Reality:

> One who by suffering is unperturbed;
>
> Not swayed by pleasure, attachment or fear,
>
> Holds gold and dust alike;
>
> Is free from gratification at praise or pain at censure;

Is above avarice, attachment and conceit;

Is untouched by pleasure and pain;

Holds praise and dispraise alike;

Has renounced lure of the world and covetousness;

And frees himself from all desire,

Abjures lust and wrath—

In the mind of such a one does the Creator dwell.

By grace of the Lord alone does man learn this way of life.

Saith Nanak: Such a one is merged into the Lord,

As water into water. (GG, 633-34)

The martyr must meet his end in perfect poise and in a spirit shunning all intent to hit back. His utter non-violence arises not from the helplessness of one subdued by puissant tyranny, but by that spiritual state wherein all rancour, all bitterness and thought of revenge have been cast out from the mind. The martyr is in the hands of God alone; from God comes his trial and to God alone he addresses his thoughts in his last moments. Without such a stance, his death would fail to attain to the noble state of martyrdom. Guru Tegh Bahadur's last thoughts were only of the great task of guiding humanity along the path of righteousness. To the continuance of his great mission he addressed his thoughts, like his grandfather, Guru Arjan, about three quarters of a century before him. The martyrdom of each of these two great souls led to far-reaching historic consequences in transforming the character of the Sikh Church from mere congregationalism to that of a crusade.

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G. S. T.

MAYA, (**Wazir Singh**) written and pronounced in Punjabi as *maia*. As a philosophic category in the Indian tradition, *maya* is interpreted variously as a veil or curtain concealing reality; the phenomenal world as it appears over against things-in-themselves; the grand illusion or the cosmic principle of illusion. Maya is assumed to stand between man and reality, producing error and illusion in the human mind, and creating difficulties in the individual's progress to a state of knowledge and bliss.

The Advaitic conception of *maya* endows it with unique and matchless powers. It is conceived as parallel to Brahm, for both are treated as beginningless (*anadi*) and beyond adequate expression in human terms. The world of names and forms is a product of *maya*, which is indicative of its powers of creating illusion and of concealing reality. Only for a spiritually advanced individual *maya* ceases to be, and Brahma alone remains. *Maya* continues to exist for the rest of mankind as an objective entity.

Sikhism does not subscribe to this extreme objectification of *maya* in the Vedantic theory. The Gurus do not assign to it the character of a metaphysical category in the framework of their scriptural compositions. Of course, the figures of Brahma, Visnu and Siva, as also of *maya*, frequently find place in *gurbani* (utterance of the Gurus) indicative of a link with the tradition of Indian thought; but these figures stand only for the powers of the Divine. Brahma, for instance, is not to be taken in the literal sense of a creator with absolute authority. Likewise, *maya* as an independent creative power would be out of place with the spirit of *gurbani*. The only agency that governs the process of nature is nature itself as a manifestation of *hukam*, the Divine Ordinance. Guru Nanak describes such a world as an empty shadow misleading the world (GG, 932). It is an ephemeral

world falsely viewed as eternal in itself. It is like the fire of a single straw, a cloud's shadow becoming flood water (GG, 717).

Emphasis on the ephemerality and non-permanence of the cosmic order is, however, only one interpretation of the Gurus' conception of *maya* and the world. *Maya* is that of which the essence is time; it has come into being at the will of the Divine, and must disappear when He so ordains. In other words, *maya* or phenomenal Nature is neither beginningless nor self-sufficient. It rests in the Creator, whose creation it is. But at the same time, it is also the embodied manifestation of the Eternal Spirit. Transient it may be, but it is not unreal. This world is the abode of God; the True and Eternal one resides in it (GG, 463).

In modern times, *maya* has been interpreted in several ways, departing from the exclusive meaning assigned to it by the orthodox Indian view, viz. grand illusion, giving *maya* an ontological status while denying reality to it. Dr. Radhakrishnan is known to have distinguished phenomenality and unreality, a view that comes quite close to the Sikh view. The world is phenomenal but not unreal; it is not real either. In Radhakrishnan, who seeks to unite Sankara and Ramanuja taking their positions as complementary, at least six meanings of the term *maya*, other than 'grand illusion', have been discerned. These are: inexpressibility of *maya*, as the relation between the Absolute and the world, not fully comprehensible to the human mind; creative activity of God, or his power of self-becoming (*maya-sakti*); duality of all things in the world-process, a mixture of spirit and nature; primal matter (*prakriti*), that is, the Absolute with *maya*; concealment: God is enveloped in the cloak of *maya*; and lastly, one-sided dependence, that is of the world on the Absolute.

In *gurbani*, *maya* is also equated with wealth (material goods) as also with the sense of attachment to worldly possessions. Most often, the term denotes delusion, since under the spell of *maya*, the mind is not able to distinguish truth from falsehood, the everlasting from the ephemeral, the essence from mere appearance. In a word, *maya* in Sikhism connotes *avidya*, that is ignorance. This is the subjective dimension of *maya*, as opposed to the Advaitic approach that not only emphasizes the objective aspect, but leads to an emphatic objectification in its treatment of the concept. The Sikh system acknowledges the existence of *maya*, and lays stress on the lessening of its spell on the human mind, so that with the liberated psychic faculties, one may attain to the state of spiritual enlightenment —a state wholly exempt from the trance of *maya*, a state of being liberated from its web and being one with the Absolute.

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W. S.

MIRI-PIRI (**Major Gurmukh Singh**), compound of two words, both of Perso-Arabic origin, adapted into the Sikh tradition to connote the close relationship within it between the temporal and the spiritual. The term represents for the Sikhs a basic principle which has influenced their religious and political thought and governed their societal structure and behaviour. The word *miri*, derived from Persian *mir*, itself a contraction of the Arabic *amir* (lit. commander, governor, lord, prince), signifies temporal power, and *piri*, from Persian *pir* (lit. old man, saint, spiritual guide, head of a religious order) stands for spiritual authority. The origin of the concept of *miri-piri* is usually associated with Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) who, unlike his five predecessors, adopted a princely style right from the time of his installation in 1606 as the sixth Guru or prophet-mentor of the Sikhs, when as part of the investiture he wore on his person two swords, one representing *miri* or political command of the community and the other *piri*, its spiritual headship. For this reason, he is known as *miri piri da malik*, master of piety as well as of power. This correlation between the spiritual and the mundane had in fact been conceptualized in the teachings of the founder of the faith, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) himself. God is posited by Guru Nanak as the Ultimate Reality. He is the creator, the ultimate ground of all that exists. The man of Guru Nanak being the creation of God partakes of His Own Light. How does man fulfil himself in this world—which, again, is posited as a reality? Not by withdrawal or renunciation, but, as says Guru Nanak in a hymn in the measure Ramkali, by "battling in the open field with one's mind perfectly in control and with one's heart poised in love all the time" (GG, 931). Participation was made the rule. Thus worldly structures—the family, the social and economic systems—were brought within the religious domain. Along with the transcendental vision, concern with existential reality

was part of Guru Nanak's intuition. His sacred verse reveals an acute awareness of the ills and errors of contemporary society. Equally telling was his opposition to oppressive State structures. He frankly censured the high-handedness of the kings and the injustices and inequalities which permeated the system. The community that grew from Guru Nanak's message had a distinct social entity and, under the succeeding Gurus, it became consolidated into a distinct political entity with features not dissimilar to those of a political state: for instance, its geographical division into *manjis* or dioceses each under a *masand* or the Guru's representative, new towns founded and developed both as religious and commercial centres, and an independent revenue administration for collection of tithes. The Guru began to be addressed by the devotees as *sachcha patsah* (true king). Bards Balvand and Satta, contemporaries of Guru Arjan (1563-1606), sing in their hymn preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib the praise of Guru Nanak in kingly terminology "He constructed the castle of truth on firm foundation, established his kingdom and had the (royal) umbrella unfurled over Lahina's (Guru Angad's) head" (GG, 966). The execution in 1606, of Guru Arjan, Nanak V, under the orders of Emperor Jahangir, marked the Mughal authority's response to a growing religious order asserting the principles of freedom of conscience and human justice. The event led to Guru Arjan's young successor Guru Hargobind, Nanak VI, formally to adopt the emblems of authority. In front of the holy Harimandar he constructed the Akal Takht, throne (*takht*) of the Timeless One (*akal*). Here he went through the investiture ceremony for which he put on a warrior's accoutrement with two swords symbolizing assumption of the spiritual office as well as the control of secular affairs for the conduct of which he specifically used this new seat. He also raised an armed force and asked his followers to bring him presents of

horses and weapons. This was a practical measure undertaken for the defence of the nascent community's right of freedom of faith and worship against the discriminatory religious policy of the State. To go by the tradition preserved in *Sikhan di Bhagat Mala* ascribed to Bhai Mani Singh and in *Gurbilas Chhevn Patshahi*, Guru Arjan himself had encouraged the military training of his son, Hargobind, and other Sikhs. By founding the Akal Takht and introducing soldierly style, Guru Hargobind institutionalized the concept of Miri and Piri. His successors continued to function as temporal as well as spiritual heads of the community although there were no open clashes with the State power as had occurred during his time. Guru Har Rai, Nanak VII, tried to help the liberal prince Dara Shukoh against his fanatic younger brother, Aurangzib. To checkmate Emperor Aurangzib's policies of religious monolithism, Guru Tegh Bahadur toured extensively in the countryside exhorting the populace to shed fear and stand up boldly to face oppression. He himself set an example by choosing to give away his life to uphold human freedom and dignity.

The blending of Miri and Piri was consummated by Guru Gobind Singh in the creation of the Khalsa Panth, a republican set-up, sovereign both religiously and politically. Ending personal guruship before he died, he bestowed the stewardship of the community on the Khalsa functioning under the guidance of the Divine Word, Guru Granth Sahib, in perpetuity. The popular slogan, "The Khalsa shall (ultimately) rule and none shall defy," is attributed to him; so are the aphorisms, "Without state power *dharma* cannot flourish (and) without *dharma* all (social fabric) gets crushed and trampled upon;" and "No one gifts away power to another; whosoever gets it gets it by his own strength."

Combination of Miri and Piri does not envisage a theocratic system of government. Among the Sikhs, there is no priestly hierarchy. Secondly, as is evidenced by the Khalsa rule in practice, first briefly under Banda Singh Bahadur and later under the Sikh *misls* and Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the form of government established was religiously neutral. Religion representing Piri did provide moral guidance to the State representing Miri, and the State provided protection and support equally to the followers of different faiths. Along with the liberation of the individual soul, the Sikh faith seeks the betterment of the human state as a whole by upholding the values of freedom of belief and freedom from the oppressive authority, of man over man. Religious faith is the keeper of human conscience and the moral arbiter for guiding and regulating the exercise of political authority which must defend and ensure freedom of thought, expression and worship. This juxtaposition of the moral and secular obligations of man is the central point of the Sikh doctrine of Miri-Piri.

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M. G. S.

MOH (**L. M. Joshi**) from Sanskrit root *muh* meaning "to become stupefied, to be bewildered or perplexed, to err, to be mistaken," stands in ancient texts for perplexity or confusion as also for the cause of confusion, that is, *avidya* or *ajnana* (ignorance or illusion). In another context, it stands for "the snare of worldly illusion, infatuation." Its function is twofold: it bedims the discernment of truth, prevents the discernment of reality, and it creates an error of judgement or leads to wrong knowledge (*mithya jnana*). Men believe in an eternal reality of their own existence or ego; they see truth in what is false and seek happiness in what begets suffering. In Punjabi *moh* generally means love of and attachment to worldly things and relations. In Sikh Scripture, the term frequently occurs coupled with *maya* (*maia*) as *maya-moh* interpreted both as infatuation for or clinging to the illusory world of the senses and as illusion of worldly love and attachment. Sikh interpretation of *maya*, however, differs from that of classical, *advaita* philosophy, which considers the phenomenal world unreal and therefore an illusion caused by human ignorance. In Sikhism, the visible world is a manifestation of God Himself and is therefore real; yet it is not *satya* or true in the sense of being immutable and eternal. This world of mass, form and movement woven into the warp and woof of time and space is God's play created at His pleasure and is as such real and sacred; but it represents only one transient aspect and not the Ultimate Reality. *Maya* is not an illusion in the sense of a mirage, a factual nullity; it is a delusion which represents transient as permanent and a part as the whole. *Moh* for *maya*, i.e. for this transient world of the senses, hinders the soul's search for its ultimate goal and is, therefore, one of the Five Evils. It is related, on the one hand, to *kam* (desire, love) and *lobh* (possessiveness, covetousness) and, on the other, to *ahankar* (sense of I, my and mine). That is how *moh*

has been referred to as a net, *maiajal* (GG, 266). Guru Nanak advises shedding of *moh* as it is the source of all evil and a cause for repeated births and deaths. (GG, 356).

The antidote to *moh* is non-attachment. This is not easy, for the Gurus preach active participation in life rather than renunciation and escapism. Ultimately, of course, all depends on *nadar* or God's grace. Says Guru Nanak "*nadari kare ta ehu mohu jai*—by (His) grace alone will this *moh* be cancelled" (GG, 356). The right remedy is the understanding (*gian*) that the mundane world, its relations and affairs, demanding one's participation and involvement are transient. Non-attachment thus is not non-action, but an attitude to action characterized by Guru Nanak as that of a *bajigar*, participant in a sport. The world, says Guru Nanak in a hymn in Maru measure, "is like a seasonal pastureland where one passeth but a few days. . . Like the *bajigar* one plays one's part here and departs" (GG, 1023). An image in *gurbani* describing the ideal life is that of the lotus which, although living in water, keeps its head above it without allowing itself to be submerged.

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L. M. J.

MUKTI (**J. S. Neki**) or *Mukti* and its synonym *mokh* (Sanskrit *moksa*, *Pali* mo(k)kha) are derived from the root *much* (to let go, release) and seem to be identical in primary meaning with the English words deliverance, liberation, release, freedom and emancipation.

Although sometimes translated as 'salvation', *mukti* is different from the Christian salvation. The latter is a composite concept embodying redemption and reconciliation. Redemption is 'the change in man's relation to God by the removal of guilt and sin' (R. Hazelton, 'Salvation' in a Handbook of Christian Theology edited by M. Halverson and A. Cohen, London: Collins Fontana Books); guilt and sin, however, are not basic to the concept of *mukti*.

Mukti has two aspects—a negative and a positive one. On the negative side, it stands for having got 'loose from' or 'rid of'. That essentially implies a bonded state from which man must be freed—be it ignorance (*ajnan*), nescience (*maya*), mortality (*kal*), suffering (*dukkha*), passion (*kama*), desire (*trishna*), attachment (*moha*), superstition (*bhrama*), physical body (*sharira*) or the wheel of life and death (*avagavan*). All these spell only a perilous existence for man.

Mukti, however, is not to be construed as escapism. It is not that man is removed to a safe quarter in existence where no perils overtake him. He, rather, discovers within himself an unexpected power to withstand and not be shaken by any threat or danger. The security and integrity experienced are spiritual and ultimate; neither ephemeral nor circumstantial.

On the positive side, *mukti* signifies the fullest and truest realization of the self. The saved life is a fully human self, open and unhindered. It embodies the realization

that there is no *other* than the self. Separation and ego-consciousness stand decimated. Everlasting peace of the eternal and infinite self transcend the make-believe world of weal and woe, good and evil, gaiety and sorrow, wisdom and folly.

The basic concept underlying *mukti* is that human life is in bondage on account of its own works (*karma*). All the schools of Indian philosophy, with the lone exception of *Carvaka*, conceive of an emancipated soul which, after exhausting the effects of all *karmas*, attains the liberated state. However, what exactly is conceived as bondage, and what as liberation varies from school to school.

The *Nyaya-Vaisesika* school views it as freedom from bondage to the senses and sensuous life of pleasure and pain.

The *Sankhya* view characterizes *mukti* as the cessation of the three types of pain (*adhyatmika*, *adhibhavika*, and *adhidaivika*). The *Purusa* (self) is able to attain such a state only by transcending the adjuncts of *Prakrti* (material nature). Happiness and misery are the handicraft of the *gunas* (qualities). The liberated soul having transcended the *gunas* goes beyond pleasure and pain.

The *yogic* school prescribes *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (the state of pure, contentless consciousness) as means to liberation—the emptied consciousness shining with its own radiance.

In Vedanta, *mukti* stands for the removal of duality (*dvaita*) and the merger of the self (*Jivatman*) with the Absolute (Brahman). The self then becomes resplendent as existent, intelligent and blissful (*sat*, *cit*, and *ananda*).

Nirvana is the name for *mukti* in the Buddhist vocabulary, the two being considered mutually comparable in the same Thought category (*Majjhimai* 304).

Nirvana literally means extinction, and implies the extinction of 'the five'—viz, *rupa* (form), *sanjna* (name), *sanskara* (impression), *vijnana* (knowledge) and *vedana* (pleasure-pain).

According to *Bhakti* schools, *mukti* is attained through *upasna* (worship) and consists in finding an abode in the spiritual realm of the *upasya* (worshipped deity).

The above bird's-eye view of *mukti* as conceived by different schools of Indian philosophy serves as the essential background for the Sikh concept. In the first place, the variegated terminology employed by the various schools—including such terms as *moksa*, *nirvana*, a*paramgati, brahmajnana, nirbhau pad*, *shunya* (Punjabi *sunn*), *nirguna avastha*, etc.—has been indistinctively employed in the Sikh scripture. That possibly signifies that these various terms, though differing somewhat in conceptual detail one from the other, are held to be essentially identical by Sikh thought. Alternately, the Sikh view of *mukti* is essentially an eclectic one. That they can lend themselves to an eclectic treatment also testifies to their conceptual proximity and the Sikh concern with its catholicity.

In the second place, the Sikh thought seems to place accent on the positive aspect of *mukti*—thus departing from those schools that lay primary emphasis on its negative aspects. As an example of the latter, one may take the concept of *moksa* in the *Bhagvadgita* which is described as emancipation from evil (vii, 20), from *karma* (iv, 28), from lust and anger (v, 26), from decay and death (vii, 29), from the body (v, 23), from the illusion of opposites (XV, 5) and so on. A predominantly negative view, according to Sikh thought, cannot be the highest objective of life. Therefore

Those who know (*jnani*) desire not *vaikunth* (heaven),

They reject even *mukti* as of little import. (GG, 328)

and again,

I crave not for a kingdom, nor even for *mukti*;

What I long for is the lotus feet (of the Lord). (GG, 534)

In these quotations *mukti* as a negative concept is rejected.

The Sikh view holds that God, in His own pleasure, has Himself created both: the state of bondage (*bandhan*) and the state of freedom (*mukti*). "The free (*mukat*) and the bonded (*bandh*) alike are your creation" (GG, 796).

In point of fact, man is born free, but as he grows up, the ways of the world grow upon him. That is how from his nascent free state (*sahaj*) he slinks down step by step into the conditioned existence of worldly pursuit (*dhat*). In order to re-emerge from it and to re-attain the original state of *sahaj* he must pursue the path of *liv* (devotion). *Mukti*, in fact, is a by-product of the practice of *liv*, not its highest objective which is nothing short of God-experience itself, and subsequently remaining immersed in it forever.

The path of *liv* has its own distinctive discipline which therefore is a prerequisite for mukti. This discipline includes good actions as the first requisite (*binu kartuti mukti na paiai*—GG, 201). Other requisites are: the giving up of egoism (*mukti duara soi pae je vichon apu gavai*, GG, 1276); associating with God-men (*mukti paiai sadh sangati*, GG, 675); dwelling upon the Guru's word (*mukti maha sukh gur sabadu bichari*, GG, 942), and accepting it mentally (*mannai pavahi mokhu duar*. GG, 3); and ever remembering the Lord (*mukte raman gobindah*, GG, 1360). It is imperative for attaining *mukti* that one should be 'dead to oneself'. An egoist, be he clever or dumb, never can

attain *mukti* (*hau vichi murakhu hau vichi siana mokh mukati ki sar na jana*, GG, 466). One can attain freedom by serving him alone who is free himself (*mukte seve mukt*a *hovai*. GG, 116). The Guru can remove all fetters and render one free (*bandhan kati mukati guri kina*, GG, 804). However, none can attain *mukti* without Divine Grace (*soi mukti ja kau kirpa* hoe, GG,1261).

The Sikh concept of *mukti* is essentially that of *jivan mukti*, the one attainable in one's lifetime itself. Further, Sikhism rejects the idea of considering renunciation as the vesture of a *jivan mukta*. Contrast with it, for example, the Jain view according to which "The liberated persons. . . have to lead a mendicant's life, for, otherwise, they cannot keep themselves free from *karma*" (G. N. Joshi: *Atman and Moksa*. Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, 1965, p. 260).

Jivan mukti itself brings one to the brink of *videha mukti* (incorporeal emancipation) which is freedom not from the present body, but from any corporeal state hereafter. It spells for the *mukta* a final cessation of the weals and woes of the cycle of birth-death -birth (*janam-maran*). This ultimate mukti is a continuation of *jivan mukti*, going on after the shedding away of the corporeal frame to the final absorption into the One Absolute—the blending of light with Light (*joti jot samana*).

The Sikh *mukti* is positive concept in two important ways. First it stands for the realization of the ultimate Reality, a real enlightenment (*jnana*). The *mukta* is not just free from this or that, he is the master of sense and self, fearless (*nirbhai*) and devoid of rancour (*nirvair*), upright yet humble, treating all creatures as if they were he himself, wanting nothing, clinging to nothing.

He rises from the life of do's and don'ts to that of perfection—a state of at-one-ment with the All-self. Secondly, the mukta is not just a friend for all, he even strives for the freedom as well. He no longer lives for himself. He lives for others.

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J. S. N.

MUL MANTRA (**G. S. Talib**). This is the title commonly given to the opening lines of the Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh scripture, or to these lines when they or a portion of them are repeated at the beginning of each new *raga* section as contained in the Holy text. This is the primary or fundamental formula of the Sikh faith. Transliterated into Roman script it would read: (*ik*) *oankar satinam karta purakhu nirbhau nirvairu akal murati ajuni saibhan gurprasadi*. The English paraphrase, given the inherent inadequacies of the genre translation, would read, "God is one; call Him Eternal truth; He is the Supreme creator; He knows no fear and is at enmity with none. His being is Timeless and Formless; He is autogenous, attainable through the grace of the Guru." Its placing at the beginning of the Sikh Scripture and its use, in its entirety or in part, at a number of places in the text, especially at the opening of new *raga* sections indicates the importance in the Sikh tradition of the vision that the Mul Mantra summons. The Mul Mantra is spoken on all occasions to invoke divine aid, to bless or to sanctify. In usage, the Mul Mantra corresponds to the numerous Hindu formulae such as *Gayatri Mantra, Om Shivay Namah, Sri Ganeshaya Namah*, or *Namo Bhagvate Vasudevah*. Similarly, it corresponds to the Islamic *Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim*, or the *Kalima, La illa, il Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah*, the Buddhist *Om Mani Padme Hum* or *Buddham Sharnam Gachchhami* and similar formulas or invocations in other religious traditions. It is enunciated at the beginning before a new venture in life is undertaken. It is also repeated to fortify the soul against despondency or lower tendencies.

In the sequence in which these epithets are placed, this unique piece brings forth the inner dynamics of the Sikh way of life along with its theology, philosophy, culture, sociology, ethics and aesthetics. It differs fundamentally from the 'secret' *mantras* of

certain other traditions. Unlike the latter it is communicated to any seeker who sincerely wishes to meditate on it, to live by faith in it. It is used openly and is taught not in a secret session between the initiator and neophyte but in the presence of the assembly.

Besides the Mul Mantra, there are in the Sikh Scripture other *mantras* or (*sabdas*) to render worship, express faith or invoke divine blessings, but the repetition of Mul Mantra at numerous places establishes its fundamental and supreme importance. It is repeated with due reverence by a person being admitted to the Khalsa brotherhood and is thus also a formula of initiation.

The term Mul Mantra itself receives early mention in the writings of Sikhism. A hymn of Guru Nanak in praise of meditation on God, "*mul mantru hari namu rasainu*, devotion to God's Name, the basic creed of all, is the elixir of immortality" (GG, 1040). The Sikh poet and savant Bhai Gurdas says: "*sati nam karta purakh mul mantra simran parvanai*." (Let the devotees put faith in Mul Mantra which enunciates *sati nam karta purakh*) and *Mantra mul satiguru bachan ik man hoe aradhai koi* (Rare is the devotee who meditates on the Mul Mantra, the holy Guru's Word).

Mul Mantra is, in the first place, the unequivocal and firm assertion of the vision of eternity and immutability of God who is the Creator of the Universe. The quality of eternity is emphasized by representing God as timeless, unborn and self-existent, and by dissociating him from fear and rancour. Emphasis is also placed on devotion and on seeking, in all humility, the Divine grace without which realization is not possible.

Ik Oankar is composed of two parts: the numeral *Ik*, or one, stands for the sole Formless Reality: signifying His existence as well as His oneness, and *Oankar* (*Omkar*) is expressive of Absoluteness of God and is synonymous with Brahm. The root-word of

Omkar is of course *Om* which occurs in Indian philosophical literature to express the concept of the Supreme Being and is held to be the holiest of all. In Sikh sacred writings, however, *om* as extended into *Omkar* (written and pronounced as '*Oankar'*) is adopted. In Guru Nanak's composition *Oankar* is said to be the essence as well as the creator of the three worlds.

Satinam: Eternal Truth. It is an amplification of *Ik Oankar* and is, in a sense, its tribute. It implies the immutable character of the Absolute who is beyond categories of the qualitative common names based on His actions. His real name is Sati which denotes a homogenous indestructible power, that is truth which was in the beginning, truth which is in the middle and truth which will be in the end.

Karta Purakhu: Creator. Guru Nanak, contrary to the Advaitic and Sankhya concept of *purusa*, affirms his belief in God being the Creator and His followers full of activity. *Purakhu* in the Mul Mantra also implies the pervasive reality, leading to the belief in the immanence of God as against the transcendentalism of Islam and Advait Vedanta.

Nirbhau: Fearless. *Nirvairu*: Without enmity. Since *Oankar* is the Supreme Being and all else His own creation, He is not under fear of anyone or anything. Fear always arises from the sense of 'otherness' or duality. God is free from such maladies. Similarly, He has rancour towards none, again in contrast to the deities of Puranic and epic Hindu literature. Since God is the only One Supreme Being, He cannot be inimical towards anyone.

Akal Murati: Timeless and Formless. Though Akal means eternal, the juxtaposition of these words usually results in their being treated similarly in translation.

Sikhism teaches that God is *nirguna*, i.e. beyond qualities: when he is called *saguna*, it is as 'word' that he becomes manifest, not in a physical form. These two words reiterate God as eternal by further defining the concept—the eternal transcends strictures of time and form.

Ajuni: unborn. *Saibhan*: self-existent. *Saibhan* is a popular form of the Upanisadic *svyambhu*, implying self-willed existence. Here it seems to qualify the first term which in turn is a denial of the Hindu concept of *avatar*. God is not only unborn, He manifests Himself purely and only as a result of His own will. This autonomy is a necessary prerequisite of the concept contained in the next and final part of the *mantra*. *Ajuni* and *saibhan* are two facets of one vision and imply that the Creator is not born of any of the known physical processes of procreation, but that His Being is eternal and inhering in His own volition to be. *Ajuni* appears to be analogous to the Qur'anic affirmation in Sur Ik las (*La Yalid wa la yulad*—He neither is born of any, nor is any born of Him). Despite this similarity, there is a clear distinction with regard to the context and the significance of these affirmations. *Ajuni* has the force of repudiating the incarnation doctrine, personalized as Guru. Grace is the final arbiter. By His favour all matters come to requiem. Through His grace the individual becomes worthy of His favour. The Guru shows the way by which God's approval is won.

The Mul Mantra shows the way in which Sikhism relates the transcendence and immanence of God. In Sikh teaching with its emphasis on *bhakti*, God is seen as immanent in all existence. He is 'qualified' with certain attributes to which the individual human self can offer devotion and love. In the Mul Mantra it is unmistakably the transcendent aspect that gets emphasis. God as revealed in this creed is the

indivisible Absolute, Timeless and Uncreated. This transcendent-immanent aspect of God, neither element of which can be omitted from the full enunciation of the Sikh creed, sets it apart from the general trend of belief in Indian religious devotion; this divine presence does not shed its character of abstractness, to be realized in the soul and not viewed as an object of sense-perception, even though it is invested with supreme beauty and loveliness to inspire and receive devotion. Like Allah in Islam, Ik Oankar in Sikhism is transcendent yet a presence.

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G. S. T.

NADAR (**G. S. Talib**) (Arabic *nazar*: glance, favourable regard, favour) implying Divine grace, is a concept central to Sikh religious tradition affirming its faith in a Transcendental Being responsive to human prayer and appeal for forgiveness and mercy. It reiterates at the same time a belief in the sovereignty of Divine Will (*raza*) overriding the law of *karma* which itself is a constituent of *hukam*, the all-pervading and all-regulating Divine Law. From His Will flows grace which as the divine initiative leads the seeker to his ultimate destiny. It is postulated as the critical determinant in this process. In their holy utterances recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Gurus have repeatedly stressed how indispensable is God's grace in one's spiritual quest and how in devotion and contemplation it be constantly solicited. Some other terms used to express the concept of *nadar* are *prasad* (graciousness, favour, mediation), *kirpa* (*krpa*: tenderness, favour, clemency), *kirpa katakh* (*krpa kataksa*: glance or nod of grace), and *daya* or *taras* (pity, mercy, compassion) drawn from Indian tradition. Others, drawn from Islamic tradition, particularly of Sufi orientation, are *karam* (bounty, favour, grace), *bakhshish* or *bakhshish* (gift, grant, beneficence) and *mihar* (love, favour, mercy).

Nadar implies a cosmic order wherein a law superior to the law of *karma*, i.e. ordained system of retribution, operates. In systems like the Sankhya and Purva Mimansa and in the creeds like Buddhism wherein *karma* is held as supreme in determining and shaping destiny, the concept of *nadar* will have little relevance. It is in the theistic creeds, particularly those with attachment to devotionalism and with sensitiveness to cosmic mysteries that it takes priority as a principle overriding the retribution. Within the traditional Indian religious thought, the concept of grace finds its strongest expression in the philosophy of Visistadvaita (identity in difference) formulated

by Ramanuja. In Islamic tradition which describes Allah employing epithets such as *rahman* and *rahim* (merciful), *karim* (beneficent, gracious), *ghafur* (forgiving, clement), *sattar* (concealer of sins) and *rauf* (benign), *karam* and *fazal* are the words used for grace. In Christianity, too, the concept of grace is firmly established. But even in these creeds grace is not uncaused or an arbitrary favour, but is the result of good actions, devotion and complete surrender and submission of the self to the Universal Self. Yet the phenomenon is not unknown that of the many who tread the path of good actions and devotion and strive to grasp the Ultimate Truth, only a few in fact lay hold on it. As says Guru Nanak: *tere darsan kau keti bilalai, virla ko chinasi gur sabadi milai*—many there be who long for Thy vision; but few encounter and perceive the Guru's Word (GG, 1188).

In the Sikh system the doctrine of *nadar* is juxtaposed to that of *karma*. *Karma* is certainly important in that it will determine a favourable or unfavourable birth. At times the theory seems to receive support in the Sikh scriptures that those who in their previous existences have lived lives of relative merit acquire thereby a faculty of perception which enables them to recognize the Guru. But the total order of creation visualized in Sikhism, besides according a necessary place to *karma* as far as the initial perception of the Word is concerned, specifies mercy or grace as the ultimate arbiter. It is finally through *nadar* that the initial desire for liberation is roused as well as opportunity to lay hold on the means of liberation is obtained. In a significant line in the *Japu*, Guru Nanak contrasts the two, *karma* and *nadar*, *karami avai kapara nadari mokhu duaru*—*karma* determines the nature of our birth, but grace alone reveals the door to liberation (GG, 2). Nadar is the basic and primal factor even in prompting the human self (*jivatman*) to devotion.

Says Guru Arjan: *ja kau kirapa karahu prabh ta kau lavahu sev*—whomsoever Thou favourest, O Lord, him Thou putest in the path of devotion (GG, 814). And, again, it is through God's grace that the seeker reaches his goal: *gur parsadi hari paiai matu ko bharami bhulahi*—through Divine grace is union with God attained, let no one linger in doubt about this (GG, 936).

Just why Akal-Purakh should show mercy or grace in this manner is a matter which must remain a mystery. Mankind's understanding of the Divine Order will not provide an explanation for the fact that the prerequisite perception is awakened in some, whereas others remain bereft of it. There is a point beyond which the human understanding cannot proceed, and the giving or withholding of such perception is an issue which lies beyond that point. Akal-Purakh confers this awareness of *nam*, *sabda* and *hukam*, through His sovereign Will (*raza*) and Grace (*nadar*), freely and openly bestowed, yet not upon all seekers. The ability to find the True Guru, to hear to the Guru's voice (*sabda*) and to respond to it comes to some by Akal-Purakh's gift of mercy. Were He to withhold it, there is nothing a man can do. Without this gift of initial perception, without a divine stirring, the Guru will not be heeded and the divine Name remains unrecognized. There is, however, no cause for fatalism and despair. Sovereignty of the Divine Will notwithstanding, Guru Nanak points to the path to divine favour. One is to be content in His Will and to cleanse the mind with a view to deserving and receiving His Grace, if and when bestowed. Resorting to the imagery of curd-making for which the vessel must be thoroughly washed, the Guru affirms at the opening of Raga Suhi: *bhanda dhoi baisi dhupu devahu tau dudhai kau javahu*—wash the vessel, purify it with incense, only then proceed to receive the milk (GG, 728). Another helpful

way is that of *sukrit* (right action) which has a lasting effect. Says Guru Nanak: "Listen, listen to our advice, O my mind, it is the right action that will last; and there may not be another chance" (GG, 154-55). At another place, he says: "Everyone desires, but whether one will be fortunate enough to achieve depends upon *karam*" (GG, 157). The use of the term *karam* raises a kind of ambiguity. *Karam* as spelt and pronounced in Punjabi may mean either the Sanskrit *karma* (action) or its resultant *karam* of Punjabi meaning fate or destiny, or it may mean the Persian *karam* (grace, favour). In any case, the doctrine in Sikhism is that *nadar* is most likely to descend on one who engages in good actions. Another way to earn grace is *ardas*, prayer and supplication in extreme humility, self-abnegation and self-surrender to Divine Will. Such humility of spirit is the basis on which the spiritual and ethical life pleasing to God may be built, and grace obtained. In a nutshell, Divine favour (*nadar*) prompting the self to prayer and devotion may possibly be won through humble supplication and through cultivation of virtue and right action.

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G.S.T.

NAM (**L. M. Joshi**) (lit. name), a collection of sounds possessing the capacity to signify a person, place, thing or idea, is a key term in Sikh theology, embodying a concept of central importance. It subsumes within it the revelation of God's being, the only fit object of contemplation for the individual, the standard to which his life must conform, and the essential means of purification and liberation.

Nam translates easily and accurately into the English word 'Name', but this does not provide an actual understanding of its full import as a conceptual category in Sikhism. Even as commonly understood, a name is not a mere label. It expresses something of the nature of whatever it designates, or at least points towards that nature. As used in the compositions of the Gurus, the word *nam* is a summary expression for the whole nature of Akal-Purakh (God). Anything which may be affirmed concerning Akal-Purakh is an aspect of *nam*. Because He is all-powerful, it follows that omnipotence is part of *nam*. Because He knows all things, omniscience is similarly a feature of *nam*. The many and varied qualities which may be attributed to Akal-Purakh—His timelessness, His transcendence and immanence, even His manifestation in the form of the created world of time and space—are all to be regarded as aspects of *nam*. And because Akal-Purakh is infinite, so too is His Name.

This stress upon *nam* as an expression of the inherent nature of Akal-Purakh should not imply that it is essentially passive. In the Sikh belief, it is crucial that individuals should understand its active role. *Nam* is the bringer of liberation. The means to release from the circuit of birth and death are enunciated by the Guru, and the message thus communicated by him enjoins all people to bring their lives into harmony with the divine Name. By means of regular devotion, coupled with strict virtues, each

person can develop a pattern of living which accords with the nature of Akal-Purakh as expressed in his Name. By bringing one's being and personality into ever closer conformity with the being of Akal-Purakh as affirmed by the Name one shall obtain liberation from the cycle of transmigration. The task is not an easy one, but persistently pursued it leads to the ultimate harmony. For some people this condition of perfect peace can be attained while they are yet living this life.

The person who wishes to appropriate the benefits conferred by a discernment of the divine Name must undergo the discipline of *nam simaran*, remembrance, i.e. constant awareness of the Name. The act of *simaran* (*smarana*) is on the one hand related to the act of *surati* (*sruti*), hearing or listening to the Word (*nam*, *sabda*), and on the other to the function of *smriti*, i.e. consciousness which means retention in one's awareness of what has been heard. The notion of *nam simaran* is thus similar to that of *surati-sabda*. At one level this involves the practice of *nam japana* or repeating the Name, a long established convention whereby merit is acquired by devoutly repeating the sacred word. This helps the devotee to internalize the meaning of the word he may be uttering and in this sense the practice is explicitly enjoined in the Sikh faith Further, the discipline must be practised in a corporate sense with devotees gathering as a fellowship (*satsang*) to sing hymns of praise (*kirtan*). A third level which is also required of the loyal disciple is meditation. Akal-Purakh, as expressed in the Name, is to be remembered not merely in the repeating of auspicious words or the singing of inspired hymns but also in deep contemplation of the divine mystery of the Name. All three practices constitute legitimate and necessary forms of *nam simaran*; and all serve progressively to reveal the divine Name to the person who earnestly seeks it. As Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, says in

Sarang ki Var, "Name incorruptible is beyond our comprehending. At the same time, it is our constant companion and pervades all creation. The true Guru discloses it unto us and lets us perceive it in our hearts. It is through God's grace that we meet with such a Guru" (GG, 1242). According to Guru Arjan, God's Name is the key to emancipation (*mukti*) and the means of attaining it (*jugati*); God's Name is the fulfilment (*tripati*) and enjoyment (*bhugati*). He who repeats God's Name suffers no setback. God's Name is the devotee's distinction. Repeating God's Name the devotee wins honour (GG, 264-65).

In Sikhism, *nam* is an ontological category, a term denoting the Divine presence, a proper name for the Reality, an epithet of the Truth which does not exist apart from or in addition to the Truth, but is Truth by itself. *Nam* thus means Akal-Purakh, the Creator who is beyond time. The word is sometimes used in compounds such *as sati-nam* and *hari-nam*, the Name of God. Occasionally, it is also used as a prefix as in *nam-nidhan* (the treasure of *nam*) and *nam-ra* (sap or essence of *nam*). In Sikh usage, *nam* is not mere name, but the Ultimate Reality itself. *Nam* is that Omnipresent Existence which manifests itself in the form of creation and is the source and sustenance of all beings and things (GG, 284). In other words, *nam* is the manifest form of the Transcendent Spirit, unknowable otherwise to the human mind. *Nam* is the source of creation and like God is all-pervasive. At the same time, *nam* is coextensive with creation; there is no space where *nam* is not—*jeta kita teta nau vinu navai nahi ko thau*: all that Thou hast created is Thy Name, i.e. manifestation; there is no place where Thy Name does not pervade (GG, 4). This manifestation of *nam* is orderly; its operation conforms to a fixed plan. From this point of view *nam* is identifiable with *hukam*, the divine Ordinance, and is closely

connected with divine Will (*raza*) and divine Grace (*prasad*), which are further aspects of the divine Ordinance (*hukam*). *Nam* reflects the immanence of the Transcendent One in creation, which does not exist apart from His conscious Will.

The word *nam* is normally discussed in association with the terms *shabad* (Skt. *sabda*) and guru, and it is also closely linked to the word *hukam*. In many instances *nam* and *shabad* are used interchangeably; in other cases, however, they can be separated. "From *shabad* has originated *nam*" (GG, 644), which implies that the Truth as mediated by the Guru is the *shabad* (Word), whereas Truth as received by the believer is *nam*. The Guru is the 'voice' (*bani*) of Akal-Purakh speaking the 'Word' (*shabad*) which communicates the truth of the Name (*nam*). He who cognizes *shabad* shelters *nam* in his heart. Bhai Gurdas, in his *Varan*, I.37, says that Guru Nanak set in motion the wheel of *sati-nam* or the vision of Holy Reality. Here *nam* refers to the doctrine or teaching of Guru Nanak. This doctrine is traced by Guru Nanak to his preceptor who is none other than God. "In whose heart is embedded the Name of the Lord is the true preceptor" (GG, 287). He it is who illumines the mind of the devotee with the *nam*. The mysteries of *nam* are indeed manifold; at several places in Guru Granth Sahib it is called *nidhan* or the treasure-house of riches (GG, 29, 522); without it everyone is poor (GG, 1232). It is called the light, *joti* (*jyoti*) which dispels all darkness (GG, 264).

In Sikhism, the concept of *nam* represents a whole religious way, a discipline leading to God-realization. But one cannot cognize *nam* without divine Grace. Words commonly used in this context are *nadar, daya, prasad, krpa*, etc., variously translated as 'grace' or 'mercy'. Deluded by his *haumai* (egocentricity), man remains blind to the *nam* which lies all around him, and by the act of grace will be put in the path to realizing it.

By the favour of Akal-Purakh he meets the holy Guru who makes him aware of *nam*. The person who pursues and glorifies *nam* and, in obedience to the Guru, lives a life which conforms to it, will eventually achieve the blissful serenity of union with the Divine. The actual obligations of a life of obedience find expression in the regular, disciplined practice of the various forms of *nam-simaran*, individually as well as in *sangat*, and in acts of approved piety. Faithful cultivation of *nam* lifts the disciple to that sublime condition known as mystic experience by far transcending the power of expression. It is this experience which frees him forever from the cycle of transmigration and confers on him the gift of eternal bliss.

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L. M. J.

NAM JAPANA, **KIRAT KARNI**, **VAND CHHAKANA** (**W. O. Cole**), i.e. ever to repeat God's name, to be ready to engage in the labour of one's hands and to be willing to share with others what one has gathered may be said to be the triple principle underlying Sikh ethics and way of life. This swiftly enunciated three-way formula meant conjointly to form a single edict affirms that a Sikh should ideally be a man of a sensitive spiritual and moral conscience, always ready to put his hand to the wheel and never shying away from his duty. Actions of a morally oriented individual are directed not solely towards achieving his own welfare, but towards ensuring the good of society as a whole. By linking *nam japana* to the other two precepts, Sikhism declares that the basis of wholesome living is God-centredness, compulsions and obligations of physical existence notwithstanding. At the same time, striving for spiritual well-being of the self alone with dependence on others for subsistence is not a worthy ideal, nor is it correct to give free rein to one's acquisitive nature without regard to the needs of others. For a Sikh the ideal life is that of a householder who, with the name and fear of God (and of God alone) always in his heart, earns his livelihood by honest labour and shares his victuals with the needy. In Sikhism, the way of the hermit or recluse is not approved.

Nam japana or *nam simaran*, literally means to recite and repeat the name of God. God's names are myriad, but the one accepted among Sikhs is Vahiguru or Vahguru, which is the *gurmantra*, Guru-given formula, they receive at the time of receiving the rites of initiation. In practice *nam japana* takes two forms. One is participation in worship in the *sangat*, i.e. believers gathered together to express or seek unity with God through singing and hearing His praises. The other way is that of private meditation, with or without the help of a rosary. The two methods are not exclusive of each other;

they are complementary and a Sikh is expected to use both. Attendance at *sangat* is as important as contemplation in solitude. "Repetition of God's name erases doubt and delusion," says, Guru Arjan (GG, 814), and "expunging grief, pain and fear, it produces happiness everlasting" (GG, 456). But mechanical repetition of Name is not enough. One has to realize the Divine as a reality and be in harmony with Him. As Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, has pointed out: "Everyone repeats 'Ram, Ram', but merely uttering 'Ram' from one's lips will not suffice; it is only when by the Guru's grace Ram abides in the heart that one gathers fruit" (GG, 491); and again: "Everyone has 'Hari, Hari' on his lips, but very few have Him in the heart; they in whose heart the Lord abides, O Nanak, achieve *mokh/mukti* or liberation" (GG, 565). *Nam simaran*, if it is to lead to union with God, depends on three things. The first is knowledge of the true nature of God as both *nirguna* (ineffable, abstract principle) and *saguna* (manifest, with attributes, knowable). This comes through a correct understanding of the Guru's word. Knowledge must be accompanied by faith in the compassionate nature of God and in the guiding ability of the Guru. Finally, *nam simaran* itself is a Divine gift depending on *nadar* or God's grace. To refer to the *Sukhmani*, "He on whom God through His favour bestows understanding, O Nanak, receives (the gift of) Hari-*simaran*" (GG, 263).

Kirat karni or to work to gain one's livelihood, besides signifying preference for *grhastha* or normal householder's life, has a moral value. *Kirat*, in Punjabi, is not any work; it means labour of the hands, it means *ghal* or hard, honest work and honest calling. Says Guru Arjan: "*Kirat kamavan sarab phal raviai hari nirati*—remembering God with devotion and earning one's living with honest labour is fruitful ever" (GG, 816). *Kirat karni* is necessarily based on *dharma* or righteousness, and excludes

exploitation of others. Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636) insists on *dharam di kirat* (Varan, I, 3; VI, 12; XL, II). Guru Nanak himself condemned exploitation in very strong terms. He says: "If a garment is stained with blood, it is considered to have been polluted. How can then they who suck the blood of men be reckoned to have a pure mind?" (GG, 140). At another place he says: "To appropriate what by right is another's is like eating hog for one (a Muslim) and cow for the other (a Hindu)" (GG, 141). The story in the Janam Sakhis about how Guru Nanak preferred to eat the coarsest, but hard-earned, fare in the home of a poor carpenter to rich viands at the banquet of a wealthy nobleman itself underscores the value of honest labour. *Kirat* is central to the Sikh concept of *seva* or self-abnegating deeds of service. In *seva* no task is considered inferior or degrading; in fact the humbler the task the more honourable it is for the Sikh engaged in *seva*. No calling is considered low or mean in Sikhism, which totally rejects the caste system.

Vand chhakana is perhaps best rendered into English as "sharing with others what one eats or earns." Guru Nanak observes, "Do not put faith in one who styles himself a spiritual teacher but goes about begging. He alone, O Nanak, knows the way who lives by the labour of his hands and shares his earnings with others" (GG. 1245). These principles constitute the basis of the Sikh institutions of Guru ka Langar (community kitchen) and *dasvandh* (tithes), setting apart of the obligatory one-tenth of one's earnings for communal purposes. The central concern of the Sikh as a householder, viz: *kirat karni*, is on the one hand associated with and conditioned by *nam japana* (says Kabir in one of his verses included in the Guru Granth Sahib: " Let your body be engaged in work, but your mind must always be focussed upon God"), on the other, *kirat*, sanctified by *nam*, must fulfil the mandatory injunction of *vand chhakana* to the exclusion of both

exploitation and hoarding. Life regulated by the triple principle of meditation, work and social responsibility is, according to Sikhism, the means for an individual to fully realize his potentialities and to contribute towards the continuation and progress of society.

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W. O. C.

NISHAN SAHIB (**Parkash Singh**) is the name for the tall Sikh flag which marks all *gurdwaras* and other religious premises of the Sikhs. *Nishan* is a Persian word with multiple meanings, one of these being a flag or standard. Sahib, an Arabic word with the applied meaning of lord or master, is here used as an honorific. Thus Nishan Sahib in the Sikh tradition means the holy flag or exalted ensign. A synonymous term is Jhanda Sahib (*jhanda* also meaning a flag or banner). The Sikh pennant, made out of saffron-coloured, occasionally out of blue-coloured, mainly in the case of Nihangs, cloth is triangular in shape, normally each of the two equal sides being double of the shorter one. The pennant is stitched to the mast sheath at the top which is also of the same cloth. On it is commonly printed or embroidered the Sikh emblem, comprising a *khanda* (two-edged sword) and *chakra* (an edged circular weapon, a disc or quoit) and two *kirpans* which cross each other at the handles, with the blades flanking the *chakra*. Sometimes the flag would have inscribed on it *Ik Onkar*, term in the Mul Mantra signifying the Supreme Reality. The flagstaff has a steel *khanda* fixed on the top of it. No size is laid down for the Nishan Sahib. The two flags standing adjacent to each other betwixt the Harimandar and the Akal Takht at Amritsar are approximately 40 metres high. Nishan Sahib is hoisted either in the compound of a *gurdwara* or on the top of the building itself. Sometimes there are two flags in a *gurdwara*, one in the premises and the other atop the edifice.

Outside of *gurdwaras*, the Nishan Sahib is seen carried at the head of Sikh processions. In such public marches which generally take place on religious occasions, five Sikhs, designated as Panj Piare, carry one each of the five Nishan Sahibs in front of the palanquin in which the holy Guru Granth Sahib is seated. Sikh public congregations

as often as not open with the flag-hoisting ceremony at which Nishan Sahib is unfurled by an eminent member of the Panth. Earlier in the time of Guru Gobind Singh and during the eighteenth century, the Sikh armies, when on the march or in the battlefield, had the Sikh standard carried in front by *nishanchis* (standard-bearers). One of the Sikh *misls*, which in addition to being a fighting formation in its own right, perhaps provided *nishanchis* to other *misls*, was for this reason named Nishananvali *misl*. In their *ardas*, routine supplicatory prayer, Sikhs daily, and in fact every time they pray individually or collectively, recall *nishanan dhaman di kamai*, the grandeur of their flags and holy places, and supplicate: *chaukian, jhande, bunge jugo jug atal* (may our choirs, standards and citadels flourish forever).

The origin of the Nishan Sahib is traced to the time of Guru Hargobind who hoisted a flag over the Akal Takht (or Akal Bunga) at Amritsar as it was erected in 1606. The flag the first of its kind in Sikh tradition was called Akal Dhuja (the immortal flag) or Satguru ka Nishan (standard of the true Guru). The flag on the top of the Harimandar was first installed by Sardar Jhanda Singh of the Bhangi clan in 1771. In 1783 Udasi Mahants Santokh Das and Pritam Das brought from Dera Ram Rai (Dehra Dun) a tall *sal* tree in one piece and using it as the flagpost raised a Nishan Sahib in front of a *bunga* (a hospice or resting place) next to the Akal Takht whence this *bunga* acquired the name *Jhanda Bunga*. In 1820 Sardar Desa Singh Majithia whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh had entrusted with the management of Darbar Sahib replaced the wooden flagpost with a steel one covered with gilded copper sheets. Later a similar flagpost was also presented by the Maharaja himself but this was not erected till 1841 when the one installed by the Majithia *sardar* was damaged in a storm. Then the damaged flagpost was also got repaired and

erected by Desa Singh's son Lahina Singh Majithia and two Nishan Sahibs of equal height have been flying in front of Jhanda Bunga since then. Both these flag posts were of solid iron. After it had been decided to widen the *parikrama* (circumambulatory terrace around the *sarover*), the two Nishan Sahibs were pulled out and refixed a few metres away from the former site in 1923. In 1962 the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee replaced them with new ones of steel pipes similarly sheathed with gilded copper sheets so that electric cables leading to the lights on top could pass through them.

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Pk. S.

NITNEM (**Noel Q. King**) (*nit* daily; *nem*; practice, rule or regimen) is the name given to the set prayers which every Sikh is commanded to say daily, alone or in company. These prayers or texts are five in number—for early morning Guru Nanak's *Japu* and Guru Gobind Singh's *Japu* and *Savaiyye*, for the evening at sunset *Sodaru Rahrasi* and for night before retiring *Kirtan Sohila*. The ideal Guru Nanak, founder of the faith, put forth before his followers was to "rise early in the morning, remember the True Name and meditate upon His greatness" (GG, 2). According to Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, "He who wishes to be called a Sikh of the True Guru must rise early in the morning and repeat God's Name. He should bathe in the pool and dwell upon the Lord through the Guru's word" (GG, 305). Recitation by Sikhs of three of the *banis* in the morning, evening and late evening must have become established practice before the time of Guru Arjan who when compiling the (Guru) Granth Sahib in 1604 placed them in that order at the beginning of the Holy Writ. Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636) records in his *Varan* that, at Kartarpur where Guru Nanak had settled after his travels, it was a daily practice to recite *Japu* early in the morning and *Rahrasi* and Arati (*Sohila*) in the evening (1.38). The compositions of Guru Gobind Singh, last of the Gurus, were added to the regimen later.

The directions regarding *nitnem* set down *in Sikh Rahit Maryada* published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, statutorily elected representative body of the Sikhs, say: "A Sikh should rise early, bathe and meditate on the Timeless One repeating the name 'Vahiguru.' He should recite the *nitnem* which includes the following *banis*: *Japu, Japu* and the ten (prescribed) *Savaiyye* in the morning, *Sodaru Rahrasi* in the evening and *Sohila* at bedtime." It further stipulates that *ardas* or supplicatory prayer should necessarily follow the recitation of the *banis* at three times during the day.

The *Japu* goes back to the very origin of Sikhism. According to *Miharban Janam Sakhi*, its *pauris* or stanzas composed by Guru Nanak on different occasions were arranged in a single order by Guru Angad under the former's instructions. The *Japu* is preceded by Mul Mantra and concludes with a *sloka*. The Mul Mantra is the root doctrinal statement of Sikh faith comparable to Nicene Creed in Christianity, Kalima-i-Shahadat in Islam, the Shema in Judaism or Gayatri Mantra in Hinduism. It is to be noted, however, that the term *Japu*, even where it includes the section specifically termed *mantra*, as such has no magical connotation as in the case of the Sanskrit *mantram*. It may have the same effect in evoking the power of the utterance of basic or primordial sound, but it does not in itself signify any magical effect. The Mul Mantra in full or in an abbreviated form is repeated at the beginning of all major *banis* or sections of the Guru Granth Sahib. Similarly, the concluding sloka of the *Japu* is usually recited to signal the end of a ritual service.

Most Sikhs know the *Japuji Sahib*, as *Japu* is reverently called, by heart and recite it as a set morning prayer. The second item in the morning prayer is the *Japu* or *Japu Sahib*, a composition of the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Different from the *Japu* in rhythm and vocabularly, it renders a magnificent paean of adoration to the Divine. The third morning text is *Das* (Ten) *Savaiyye*, culled from a longer composition by Guru Gobind Singh, *Akal Ustati* (lit. Praise to the Timeless). Besides these three morning prayers, there can be additions according to the usage of the place, the occasion and the desire of the individual or the *sangat*. For example, the whole of *Anandu* (*Sahib*) or the first five and the final stanza of it may be added; some Sikhs would also recite *Shabad Hazare*, while others would recite the *Sukhmani Sahib*; Nihangs

would include *Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki*, popularly called *Chandi di Var* in the morning order. *Asa ki Var* is usually sung by musicians at *gurdwaras* in the morning. Some read it at their homes in addition to the daily regimen.

Sodaru Rahrasi, the evening prayer comparable to Vespers or Evensong, is recited soon after sunset. The title *Sodaru* is taken from the first word of the first hymn of the text. *Rahrasi* variously means prayer, supplication, usage and greetings. It is also interpreted as an adaptation of the Persian term *rah-i-rast* (the right path). The order begins with nine *sabdas* which also stand together in the Guru Granth Sahib, immediately after the *Japu*. They are followed by three compositions by Guru Gobind Singh—*Benati Chaupai* taken from the final tale (404) of *Charitropakhyan*, and a *savaiyya* and a *sloka* from *Rama Avtar* and by the first five and the last stanzas of the *Anandu* (Sahib), and *Mundavani*.

Sohila, or Kirtan Sohila as it is generally called, is the late-evening prayer recited before going to bed. It takes its name from the word *Sohila* in the second line of its first hymn, viz. *titu ghari gavahu sohila sivarihu sirjanharo* (In that state sing His praises and meditate upon Him). *Sohila* is literally a paean or song of praise and *kirtan* means devotional singing. *Kirtan Sohila* occurs at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib, immediately following *Sodaru Rahrasi*, and includes five hymns—three by Guru Nanak and one each by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. The middle hymn is connected with Guru Nanak's visit to the Jagannath temple at Puri, in Orissa. In the evening, the priests there were performing *arati*, the ritual worship by swinging in front of the idol a salver studded with lighted lamps. Guru Nanak through this hymn explained to them the futility of the ritual, as already the spheres, the sun, the moon and the stars are revolving in

God's worship, with fire serving as incense and wind as a whisk, and so on. The final verse of *Kirtan Sohila* beginning with *karau benanti sunahu mere mita sant tahal ki bela*—Listen my friend, I beg you, this life is the occasion to serve the holy ones—is a call to one to devote oneself to good deeds of service and devotion. The last line of this hymn is a supplication to God for fulfilling the only wish of the devotee which is to be "the dust of the (feet of the) holy ones." On this note and on the assurance that if one devotes one's life to God and service with humility one will suffer transmigration no more, ends the *Kirtan Sohila*.

Each service is concluded with *ardas*, a prayer or petition invariably used by Sikhs to conclude any devotional meeting or ceremony.

When Nitnem is performed in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, *ardas* is followed by *hukam* or *vak* (lit. order or utterance), that is, reading of a hymn from the Holy Book opened at random, and, if it is in *sangat*, *prashad* or consecrated food is distributed.

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N. Q. K.

ONKAR (**D. K. Gupta**), generally written down as Oankar in Sikh Scriptural writings, is derived from the Upanisadic word Oankara (om+kara) originally signifying pronouncing or rendering into writing the syllable Om. Known as synonym of Om it has been used in the Vedic literature and, in particular in its religio-philosophical texts known as the Upanisads, as a holy vocable of mystical signification and as the most sacred of the names of Brahman, the Supreme Self or the one entity which fills all space and time and which is the source of the whole universe including the gods themselves.

The word *om*, the most hallowed name of Brahman, is derived, according to the *Gopatha-brahmana* (1. 24), from *ap* 'to pervade' or from *av* 'to protect'. This monosyllable is said to command the highest spiritual efficacy for the realization of the Supreme Spirit. Considering Brahma (a) to be inhalation, Visnu (u) to be suspension, Rudra (m) to be exhalation, the *pranayam* is also indicated as obtainable by concentration on Om.

The three sounds (*AUM*) have been described as symbolizing the material, the subtle and the causal world respectively (Man. Up. 8.11). This interpretation envisages the comprehension of the entities of matter (*prakriti*), spirit (*jiva* or *atman*) and God (Brahma) within the concept of Om or Oankara. The three sounds have also been identified with three quarters of Brahman representing, in their respective order, His waking, dreaming and sleeping states, His fourth quarter, all pervading Oankar, having been described as transcending all conventional dealings and the phenomenal world (Man. Up., 9.12). Amidst the *ksara* or perishable objects of the phenomenal world, He is *ekaksara*, the Sole Imperishable One (*Atharvaveda*, V. 28. 8; BG V111, 13).

According to the Upanisadic seers, the word Om, known as Pranava also, serves as an aid or a medium to the meditation on, and the realization of, the Supreme Spirit (*P.Up*. V. 5; *Sv Up*. I. 13-14; *Katha Up*. 1. 2.17). The *Mundaka Upanisad* (11. 2.3.4) metaphorically describes Pranava or the Oankara as the great bow which helps the arrow in the form of soul, sharpened with meditation, reach the target, that is, the Imperishable Brahman. According to the *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (I. 13), the Universal Spirit is realized through Oankara just as the form of fire is realized through the fuel. Identifying Oankara, the name or the signifier, with Brahman, the object signified, the seers imply that meditation on Oankar means meditation on Brahman. The *Mandukya Upanisad* accepts syllable Om as "all that is past, present or future, and whatever is beyond the three periods of time is also verily Om."

The pantheistic concept of Brahman as the Supreme Self, one and impersonal in character, and often identified with Om or Oankara, continued to hold good along with the growth of the polytheistic concept of the personal gods like Brahma, Visnu and Siva, the two concepts acting and reacting and complementing each other in the long history of the religio-philosophical tradition of India.

Guru Nanak, in order to emphasize the strict monotheism of the creed he was preaching and to discountenance any possibility of the kind of polytheism prevalent in India reasserting itself, added the numeral 1 (one, pronounced as *ek* in most Indian languages), the formula for the Supreme Being thus emerging from his revelation as Ek Oankar. To this numeral one (*ek* or *ik*) a mystical significance attaches in the Sikh creed. Besides being the opening sentence-phrase of the Mul Mantra, standing at the head of the Guru Granth Sahib, Ek Oankar emphasizes the Nirguna (the unattributed) character of

Brahman, the Supreme Being. *Ek* or *ik* in this formula is called *bij-mantra* or the seed formula, out of which has grown the entire fabric of Sikh creed, which totally discountenances any polytheistic or even what is known as the henotheistic concept. This *Ek* is the very image of the Supreme Being, the Divine Essence (*suddha svarupa*), accepted in Guru Granth Sahib. Bhai Gurdas, the great savant and poet, thus expresses the relationship of Ek with Oankar: "The creator first manifested the One; and after, set by its side the 'ura' 'Oankar'." (*Varan*, III. 15). For 'O' the original is *ura*, the first neuter vowel-letter of the Gurmukhi alphabet, representing according to its diacritical mark 'O' or 'U'.

From the above it will be indicated that the numeral Ek with Oankar is all-important emphasizing the attributelessness, soleness and transcendence of Brahman, also known in Sikh theology as Parbrahma 'transcendent Brahman'. Among the names of the Supreme Being primarily belongs Ek Oankar, which is repeated in Mul Mantra by the initiates to Sikhism, when taking *amrit*.

A distinction exists philosophically between Ek Oankar and Oankar. Ek Oankar being the unattributed, transcendent aspect of the Supreme Being, Oankar is the attributed (*sagun*, *sargun*) aspect, the Creator, to whom devotion and worship may be offered. In the Sikh creed the Supreme Being is both 'attributed' and 'unattributed', no distinction being made between His two aspects—attributed aspect not represented by any deities or such other beings. The combination in Him of both aspects is emphasized in *Sukhmani* (GG, 287, 290). In numerous places in Gurbani the combination in the Supreme Being of transcendence and immanence, the unattributed and the creative (attributed) aspect, is emphasized through various images and similes. Maha Kavi Santokh Singh, in his *Tika*

Garab Ganjani affirms that Oankar, the creative aspect of the Supreme Being is Brahma associated with *maya*. In the hymn *Ramkali Dakhni Oankar*, at the very outset, the Creator is saluted as Oankar. Guru Amar Das in *Maru Solahe* (18), affirms: "*Oankar sabh sristi upai*"—Oankar created the universe. Bhai Gurdas (*Varan*, XXXVII. 1) represents Oankar as the Creator. He further endorses that by becoming and uniting Siva and *Sakti*, the creation is brought about by Oankar. Ik Oankar is likened to the sun which shines in sole splendour, while the manifest universe is likened to the numberless stars. In *Varan*, 26. 2, the melody of the word rising from Ek Oankar is said to have created the Oankar (with attributed form). In *Varan*, 29.19, Bhai Gurdas recounts three stages of the Supreme Reality. They are: Nirankar, Ekankar and Oankar. Nirankar being the Sunn Samadhi (seedless trance) stage, Ekankar and Oankar may be considered as grosser stages of the Nirankar Brahman, in and through which He creates the cosmos. This elucidation by Bhai Gurdas is consistent with Guru Nanak's thought in *Var Asa* where he expounds: "*apinai* (Nirankar) *apu sajiu* (Ekankar) *apinai rachio nau* (Oankar) *dui qudarati sajiai* (creation from Oankar) *kari asanu ditho chau* (all pervading Nirankar creative as Oankar)." It may be further noted that all the three aspects of Aphur Brahman, i.e. Nirankar, Ekankar and Oankar have been delineated as creators by saying "*Oankar sabh sristi upai*" (GG, 1061), "*Nirankar akaru upaia*" (GG, 1065) and "*Ekankaru eku pasara ekai apar apara*" (GG, 821). In *Varan*, 18.12, also *Oankar* is presented by Bhai Gurdas as the Creator. To contrast with *Oankar*, terms *Nirankar* (the formless) and *Niradhar* (the absolute) are used. In *Sukhmani* (GG, 276, 284), after creation is dissolved, the Supreme Being remains Sole Absolute (Ekankar, Ik Oankar).

Guru Gobind Singh also, in *Akal Ustati*, salutes the Absolute by saying: *'pranvo adi ekankara'* (I bow to the Primal Absolute).

The signification attaching to Ik Oankar must have become clear, which while using the syllable Oankar from Upanisadic literature has given to it a meaning and conceptual content different from what it bears in those texts.

This concept of Ik Oankar (the Sole Oankar), also written down as *Ekankar* (GG, pp. 153, 276, 608, 736, 838 etc.) represented by the holy syllables (l) in the Granth Sahib, is the basic tenet of the Sikh religion and its theology. This symbol precedes the Mul Mantra or the basic formula of the Sikh theology, prefixed to the *Japu* and all the musical measures in the Guru Granth Sahib. The Mul Mantra enunciates in succinct form, the concept of Ek Oankar, who is the Sole Supreme Self, the Truth Eternal, the Creator of all and Self-existent. While defining Him, the Mul Mantra, uses some negative terms also. Thus He is described as Nirbhau—without fear; Nirvair—without rancour; Akal-Murati—form eternal; Ajuni— not subject to the cycle of birth and death.

This concept of Oankar has been expounded in elaborate and inspiringly sublime form in the Guru Granth Sahib which time and again has put a special emphasis, in view of the socially as well as the spiritually disintegrating thought necessitated by the prevailing circumstances, on the oneness of the Supreme Being. It is only with reference to His infinite creation or the multiplicity of the beings, both animate and inanimate, created by Him that He has been described as *anek* (not one, i.e. many) and *saguna* in the Guru Granth Sahib; otherwise, primarily, He has been conceived and described as *nirguna*. Nirguna Aphur Brahman in Sikhism being Saphur, without changing His transcendent character and stimulating His creative divine power, Oankar, which hitherto

was latent and unmanifest, creates the cosmos by assuming the role of the Karta-Purakh. He is not that Nirankara becomes *sakar* in any gross sense; he rather, in the Guru Granth Sahib, is explained as a creative divine power. In Indian philosophical and theological thought where *av* is considered as the root of Om, the emphasis is laid upon its protective aspect, whereas in Sikh Scripture its creative divine power has been taken into account.

Of the other terms considered equal to Oankar or Brahman, the term *sat* and its cognates *satya* and *sach* being the basic need of a spiritually as well as socially well-knit society, get a preferential treatment by the Gurus in the Guru Granth Sahib.

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D. K. G.

PAHUL (**Taran Singh**) or *amrit sanskar*, the name given in the Sikh tradition to the ceremony of initiation. The word *pahul* or *pahul* is a derivative from a substantive, *pahu*—meaning an agent which brightens, accelerates or sharpens the potentialities of a given object. In the history of the Sikh faith, the initiation ceremony has passed through two distinct phases. From the time of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder, up to 1699, *charanamrit* or *pagpahul* was the custom. *Charanamrit* and *pagpahul* meant initiation by water touched by the Master's toe—the *charan* and *pag* both being equivalents of the word 'foot'. In early Sikhism, the neophytes sipped water poured over the Guru's toe to be initiated into the fold. Where the Guru was not present, *masands* or local *sangat* leaders officiated. A reference to initiation by *charanamrit* occurs in Bhai Gurdas, Varan, I.23, born 12 years after the passing away of Guru Nanak. The practice continued until 1699 when, at the time of the inauguration of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh introduced *khande di pahul*, i.e. *pahul* by *khanda*, the double-edged steel sword. This was done at Anandpur at the time of Baisakhi festival on 30 March 1699, in a soul-stirring drama. At the morning assembly of the Sikhs drawn from all four corners of India, Guru Gobind Singh, sword in hand, proclaimed, "My sword wants today a head. Let any one of my Sikhs come forward. Isn't there a Sikh of mine who would be prepared to sacrifice his life for his Guru?" To five similar calls successively made, five Sikhs offered their heads one after the other. They were Daya Singh, Mohkam Singh, Sahib Singh, Dharam Singh and Himmat Singh. Guru Gobind Singh proceeded to hold the ceremony of initiation to mark their rebirth as new men. Filling an iron bowl with clean water, he kept stirring it with a two-edged sword while reciting over it five of the sacred texts, *banis—Japu, Jap, Savaiyye, Chaupai* and *Anand* (stanzas 1-5, and 40). The

Guru's wife, Mata Jitoji (according to some, Mata Sahib Devan), poured into the vessel sugar crystals, mingling sweetness with the alchemy of iron. The five Sikhs sat on the ground around the bowl reverently as the holy water was being churned to the recitation of the sacred verses. With the recitation of the five *banis* completed, *khande di pahul* or *amrit*, the Nectar of Immortality, was ready for administration. Guru Gobind Singh gave the five Sikhs five palmsful each of it to drink. The disciple sat *bir-asan*, i.e. in the posture of a warrior with his left knee raised and the right knee touching the ground. Every time the Guru poured the nectar into his palms to drink, he called out aloud, "*Bol Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh* (Utter, Hail the Khalsa who to the Lord belongs; the Lord to whom belongs victory)." The Sikh repeated the blessed utterance. After the five life-giving draughts had been thus administered, the Guru sprinkled the holy liquid into his face gazing intently into his eyes. He then anointed his hair with the nectar. In the same manner, Guru Gobind Singh initiated the other four one by one. At the end, all five of them were given the steel bowl to quaff from it turn by turn the remaining elixir in token of their new fraternal comradeship. Then, following the Guru, they repeated Vahiguru five times as *gurmantra* and five times recited the Mul Mantra They were given the common surname of *Singh*, (meaning lion) and enjoined to regard themselves as the khalsa, i.e. the Guru's own. They were told that their rebirth into this brotherhood meant the annihilation of their family ties (*kul nas*), of the occupations which had formerly determined their place in society (*krit nas*), of their earlier beliefs and creeds and of the ritual they observed. Their worship was to be addressed to none but Akal, the Timeless One. They were ever to keep the five emblems of the Khalsa—*kesa* or long hair and beard; *kangha*, a comb tucked into the *kesa* to keep it tidy in contrast to

the recluses who kept it matted in token of their having renounced the world; *kara*, a steel bracelet to be worn round the wrist of the right hand; *kachchha*, short breeches; and *kirpan*, a sword. In the *rahit* or code of conduct promulgated for the Sikhs on that day were the four prohibitions, i.e. the cutting or trimming of hair, fornication or adultery, *halal* meat or flesh of animal slaughtered with the Muslim ritual, and tobacco.

The five were designated by Guru Gobind Singh as Panj Piare, the five beloved of the Guru. He now besought them to initiate him into their brotherhood, and asked them to prepare *khande di pahul*. The Panj Piare churned the holy water following the Guru's example and administered to him the vows they had received from him. Even his name changed to (Guru) Gobind Singh. Many Sikhs then volunteered to undergo initiation.

The five who took the next turn were Ram Singh, Deva Singh, Tahal Singh, Ishar Singh and Fateh Singh. They were called by the Guru Panj Mukte, the Five Liberated Ones. According to the *Guru kian Sakhian*, in the next row stood Mani Ram, Bachittar Das, Ude Rai, Anik Das, Ajab Das, Ajaib Chand, Chaupat Rai, Diwan Dharam Chand, Alam Chand Nachna and Sahib Ram Koer, followed by Rai Chand Multani, Gurbakhsh Rai, Gurbakhshish Rai, Pandit Kirpa Ram Datt of Mattan, Subeg Chand, Gurmukh Das, Sanmukh Das, Amrik Chand, Purohit Daya Ram, Barna, Ghani Das, Lal Chand Peshauria, Rup Chand, Sodhi Dip Chand, Nand Chand, Nanu Ram of Dilvali, and Hazari, Bhandari and Darbari of Sirhind.

Khande di pahul thus supplanted *charanamrit*. Since then initiation has been by *amrit* or holy water prepared in the manner laid down by Guru Gobind Singh. For the novitiates the same ceremony will be repeated. Panj Piare chosen at any place for their piety and reputation will officiate, in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib attended by a

Granthi. Among the Panj Piare could be women too, as there could be among the novitiates. No particular age is prescribed for initiation. It could take place any time the novitiate is able to appreciate the significance of the ceremony and is prepared to abide by the discipline it imposed. A *patit*, an apostate or lapsed Sikh guilty of committing a *kurahit*, i.e. violation of any of the prohibitions laid down by Guru Gobind Singh, will have to go through the same ceremony to have himself reinitiated and readmitted into the Khalsa fold. Khalsa *rahit* or discipline flowing from *khande di pahul* has been sought to be codified in *Rahitnamas*, manuals of conduct. Some of these are attributed to Guru Gobind Singh's contemporaries such as Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh and Bhai Nand Lal.

Directions with regard to the conduct of the *amrit* ceremony as issued by the Shiromani. Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in its publication *Sikh Rahit Maryada* are as follows:

(a) The initiation ceremony may be conducted in any quiet and convenient place. In addition to the Guru Granth Sahib, presence of six Sikhs is necessary: one *granthi* to read from the Guru Granth Sahib and five to administer the rites.

(b) Both receiving initiation and those administering it should bathe and wash their hair prior to the ceremony.

(c) Any Sikh who is mentally and physically "whole" (man or woman) may administer the rites of initiation provided that he himself had received the rites and continues to wear the five K's, i.e. Sikh symbols each beginning with the Gurmukhi letter "**k**".

(d) Any man or woman of whatever nationality, race or social standing, who is prepared to accept the rules governing the Khalsa community, is eligible to receive initiation.

(e) No minimum or maximum age limit is stipulated for those receiving initiation.

(f) Those undergoing initiation should have the five K's (unshorn hair, comb, shorts, sword, steel bangle). No jewellery or distinctive marks associated with other faiths may be worn. The head must be covered.

(g) Anyone seeking readmission after having resiled from his previous pledges may be awarded a penalty by the five administering initiation before being readmitted.

(h) During the ceremony, one of the five Piare ("five loved ones"—representing the first five Sikhs), stands and explains the main rules and obligations of the Khalsa Panth. These are to love and pray to one God, to read, study and live according to the Sikh teachings, and to help and serve humanity at large.

Those receiving initiation are then asked if they are willing to abide by these rules. If they indicate their assent, one of the five says a prayer for the commencement of the preparation of the *Amrit* (Nectar) and a lesson or passage from the Guru Granth Sahib randomly opened is read.

Clean water and sugar or other soluble sweet is placed in the bowl which must be of steel. The five now position themselves around the bowl in the *bir asan* position (kneeling on the right knee with the weight of the body on the right foot, and the left knee raised). Having so positioned themselves they commence to recite the following:

The *Japji Sahib, Jap Sahib*, *Ten Svaiyyas* (*Saravag sudh vale*), *Benti Chaupai* (from *Hamri karo hath dai rachchha* to *dusht dokh te leho bachai*) and the first five verses and the last verse of *Anandu Sahib*.

Anyone who is reciting these prayers should place his left hand on the edge of the bowl and stir the nectar with a short sword held in the right hand. The others participating in the ceremony should place both hands on the edge of the bowl and concentrate and meditate on the nectar.

After the completion of these prayers, one of the five says the *ardas*, after which the nectar is served. Only those who have sat through the whole ceremony may be served.

The Nectar is received by those being initiated whilst sitting in the *bir asan* position (previously described) with the hands cupped, right on left to receive the nectar.

This is received five times in the cupped hands; each time after receiving the nectar, the person being initiated says "Vahiguru ji ka khalsa, Sri Vahiguru ji ki Fateh." This salutation is repeated each time the nectar is sprinkled on the eyes (5 times) and hair (5 times). The remainder of the nectar is then shared by those receiving initiation, al1 drinking from the same bowl.

After this, all those taking part in the ceremony recite the Mul Mantra in unison:

There is one God; His name is truth,

The all-pervading Creator,

Without fear, without hatred;

Immortal, unborn, self-existent.

One of the five then details the rules and obligations applying to the initiates.

"From now on your existence as ordinary individuals has ceased, and you are members of the Khalsa brotherhood. Your religious father is Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth and last Guru, founder of the Khalsa brotherhood) and Sahib Kaur your mother. Your spiritual birthplace is Kesgarh Sahib (birthplace of the Khalsa) and your home Anandpur Sahib (the place where Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa). Your common spiritual parentage makes you all brothers and you should all forsake your previous name (surname) and previous local and religious loyalties. You are to pray to God and God alone, through the scriptures and teachings of the ten Gurus. You should learn the Gurmukhi script if you do not know it already and read daily the *Japji, Jap, Das Svaiyye, Sodaru Rahrasi* and *Sohila*, and should hear or read the Guru Granth Sahib. You must keep the five K's and are forbidden to:

(i) smoke tobacco or take drugs

(ii) eat meat killed by ritual slaughter (i.e. according to Muslim or Jewish rites)

(iii) commit adultery

(iv) cut your hair

Anyone who contravenes any of these rules has broken his *amrit* vows. He must go through the ceremony afresh after a suitable penance if the contravention has been deliberate.

Members of the Khalsa must be always ready to work for the community and should donate one tenth of their income for the furtherance of religious or social work.

(j) The newly initiated Sikhs are told not to associate with:

(i) the followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mall, Ram Rai or other breakaway groups

(ii) those who actively oppose Sikhism

(iii) those who practise infanticide

(iv) those who take alcohol, tobacco or drugs

(v) those who wed their children for monetary considerations

(vi) those who perform any rite or ceremony not sanctioned in Sikhism

(vii) apostate Sikhs who do not adhere to the five K's.

(k) *Ardas* is then said and followed by the reading of the *hukam*. Finally, any of those present with a name that was not chosen using the Guru Granth Sahib, are asked to choose a new name in the customary manner.

The ceremony is then concluded with distribution of *karah prasad*, which, to emphasize the new brotherhood, is eaten by those newly initiated from a common plate.

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T. S.

PANGAT (**Bhagat Singh**), from Sanskrit *pankti* (lit. a row, line, series, or a group, assembly, company), stands in Sikh terminology for commensality or sitting together on the ground in a row to partake of food from a common kitchen regardless of caste, creed, sex, age or social status. *Pangat* is thus a synonym for Guru ka Langar, an institution of fundamental importance in Sikhism. It is customary for diners in the Guru ka Langar to sit side by side in a *pangat* or row when food is served to them by *sevadars* or volunteers. The institution of Guru ka Langar itself thereby came to be referred to as *pangat*. Another reason for the popularity of the term probably is its alliterative and sonorous affinity to *sangat* or holy congregation, another basic institution of the Sikhs. As, later in Sikh history, *deg* (lit. kettle) came to stand for Guru ka Langar because it rhymed with *tegh* (lit. sword), so did *pangat* for rhyming with *sangat*. The earliest use of *pangat* in Sikh literature appears in Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636), poet and exegete, in his *Varan*, XVII. 12, where it matches *sangat* to produce resonant effect: "*hans vansu nihchal mati sangati pangati sathu bananda*"—firm believers of the tribe of swans (i.e. the Sikhs) made appropriate company in *sangat* and *pangat*—in *sangat* they pray together, in *pangat* they eat together. Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) attached particular importance to *pangat*. He expected every visitor to partake of food in it before seeing him. This gave rise to the popular saying: *pahile pangat pachhe sangat*—eating together must take precedence over meeting together.

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B. S.

PANJ PIARE (**S. S. Ashok**) (lit. the five beloved), name given to the five Sikhs, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Muhkam Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh, who were so designated by Guru Gobind Singh at the historic *divan* at Anandpur Sahib on 30 March 1699 and who formed the nucleus of the Khalsa as the first batch to receive at his hands *khande di pahul*, i.e. rites of the two-edged sword.

In Sikh theology, as in the Indian classical tradition generally, *panj* or *panch*, the numeral five, has a special significance. Guru Nanak in *Japu* refers to five *khands*, i.e. stages or steps in spiritual development, and calls a spiritually awakened person a *panch*. The ancient Indian socio-political institution *panchayat* meant a council of five elders. Something like an inner council of five existed even in the time of the earlier Gurus: five Sikhs accompanied Guru Arjan on his last journey to Lahore; the five were each given 100 armed Sikhs to command by his successor, Guru Hargobind; Guru Tegh Bahadur, set out on his journey to Delhi to court execution attended by five Sikhs.

Until the Baisakhi of AD 1699, Sikh initiation ceremony, *charan pahul*, comprised the administering of *charanamrit* or *charanodak* to the novitiate. As Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, I.23, records, this was the practice Guru Nanak introduced for the Sikhs. At the ceremony the novitiate quaffed water poured over the foot of the Guru and vowed to follow the religious and moral injunctions as well as the code of communal conduct laid down. Later, *masands* or local leaders, specially authorized by the Gurus, also administered *charan pahul*. According to Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Bansavalinama*, a modification was introduced in the time of Guru Hargobind when water, poured over the toe of the right foot of each of the five chosen Sikhs assembled in a *dharamsal*, was received in a bowl and administered to the seekers after *ardas* or supplicatory prayer.

Guru Gobind Singh, who had abolished the institution of *masands* replaced *charan pahul* with *khande di pahul*. He summoned a special assembly in the Kesgarh Fort at Anandpur on the Baisakhi day of 1756 Bk/30 March 1699. After the morning devotions and *kirtan*, he suddenly stood up, drawn sword in hand, and, to quote Bhai Santokh Singh, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, spoke: "The entire *sangat* is very dear to me; but is there a devoted Sikh who will give his head to me here and now? A need has arisen at this moment which calls for a head." A hush fell over the assembly. Daya Ram, a native of Lahore, arose and offered himself. He walked behind the Guru to a tent near by. Guru Gobind Singh returned with his sword dripping blood and demanded another head. This time Dharam Das, a Jat from Hastinapur, emerged from the audience and followed the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh gave three more calls. Muhkam Chand, a cloth-printer from Dwaraka, Himmat, a water-bearer from Jagannath, and Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar, stood up one after another and advanced to offer their heads.

Guru Gobind Singh emerged from the tent "hand in hand with the five," says Kuir Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*. The disciples wore saffron-coloured raiment topped over with neatly tied turbans of the same colour. Guru Gobind Singh, similarly dressed, introduced his chosen Sikhs to the audience as Panj Piare, the five devoted spirits beloved of the Guru. He then proceeded to perform the ceremony. Filling an iron bowl with clean water, he kept churning it with a *khanda*, i.e. double-edged sword, while reciting over it the sacred verses. Guru Gobind Singh's wife Mata Jitoji, brought sugar crystals which were put into the vessel at the Guru's bidding. Sweetness was thus mingled with the alchemy of iron. *Amrit*, the Nectar of Immortality, was now ready and Guru Gobind Singh gave the five Sikhs each five palmsful of it to drink. At the end, all five of them

quaffed from the steel bowl the remaining elixir binding themselves in new fraternal ties. Their rebirth into this brotherhood meant the cancellation of their previous family ties, of the occupations which had hitherto determined their place in society, of their beliefs and creeds and of the rituals they had so far observed.

The five Sikhs—three of them the so-called low-castes, a Kstriya and a Jat—formed the nucleus of the self-abnegating, martial and casteless fellowship of the Khalsa Guru Gobind Singh had brought into being. They were given the surname of Singh, meaning lion, and were ever to wear the five emblems of the Khalsa—*kes* or unshorn hair and beard; *kangha*, a comb in the *kes* to keep it tidy as against the recluses who kept it matted in token of their having renounced the world; *kara*, a steel bracelet; *kachchh*, short breeches worn by soldiers; and *kirpan*, a sword. They were enjoined to succour the helpless and fight the oppressor, to have faith in One God and to consider all human beings equal, irrespective of caste and creed.

The episode of *sis-bhet*, i.e. offering of the heads was recorded by Bhai Kuir Singh in his *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (1751) followed by Bhai Sukkha Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh, and others. Earlier chronicles such as the *Sri Gur Sobha*, and the *Bansavalinama* do not narrate it in such detail. Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, simply says that "five Sikhs were selected one each from five different castes." From what is known about the lives of those five Sikhs, each of them had received instruction at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh, was a devoted disciple and had been in residence at Anandpur long enough to have been affected by its ambience of faith and sacrifice. It was a coincidence that they belonged to different castes and to different parts of India.

Khande di Pahul, introduced by Guru Gobind Singh on 30 March 1699, became the established form of initiation for Sikhs for all time to come; so also the institution of the Panj Piare. In fact, Guru Gobind Singh had himself initiated by the Panj Piare as he had initiated them. Since then this has been the custom. Panj Piare, any five initiated Sikhs reputed to be strictly following the *rahit*, or Sikh discipline, are chosen to administer to the novitiates *amrit*, i.e. *Khande di Pahul*. *Panj Piare* are similarly chosen to perform other important ceremonies such as laying the cornerstone of a *gurdwara* building or inaugurating *kar-seva*, i.e. cleansing by voluntary labour of a sacred tank, or leading a religious procession, and to decide issues confronting a local *sangat* or community as a whole. At crucial moments of history, Panj Piare have collectively acted as supreme authority, representing the Guru-Panth. During the battle of Chamkaur, it was the last five surviving Sikhs who, constituting themselves into the Council of Five, Panj Piare, commanded Guru Gobind Singh to leave the fortress and save himself to reassemble the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh had abolished the *masand* system and before he passed away, he also ended the line of living *gurus*. In the institution of Panj Piare, he had created the nucleus of a casteless and democratic continuing society.

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S. S. A.

PAPA (**L. M. Joshi**) (Sanskrit and Pali *papa*, Prakrit *pava*). The word stands for one of the basic concepts of the Indian religious tradition. This concept relates to what is considered religiously and morally evil, an act of body, mind, or speech opposed to what is considered religiously and morally good. In the long religious history of India the doctrine of *papa* was developed and elaborated in great detail and in many different ways by different systems of faith and morality. No single definition can adequately express its connotations. For example, in both Brahmanism and Sikhism it is customary to translate the word *papa* as 'sin'. But 'evil' could equally well convey the sense. There are some other shades of meaning, which, however, have not found a place in the relevant contexts.

Any deed of commission or omission which is opposed to Dharma, God's will, religious practice, and moral rules expressed or laid down in the sacred texts, may be included within the range of *papa*. The word thus means any act irreligious, immoral, bad, wicked, vicious and depraved. Some of the semantic cognates of *papa* are *pataka* (sin); *apunya* (unholy); *akushala* (bad); *ashubha*, (inauspicious); *kilbisa*, *kilbikh* (evil); *dosha* (defilement), *duskrta* (crime) and *apavitra* (impure).

The etymology of *papa* is obscure. The word *pataka* is derived from the root *pat*, to fall, physically or in the moral sense. Sin is what causes a fall from the religious, moral and spiritual position, the nature of which may vary from tradition to tradition. Violation of, or opposition to, a prescribed religious or moral law causes not only fall but also bondage. Therefore, it is said, that which binds or fetters (*pasayati*) and causes downfall (*patayati*) is called *papa* or sin. This seems to be the best soteriological definition of *papa* in the context of India's religious experience which has placed

supreme value on spiritual release (*moksa*). It is obvious that the idea of *papa* is associated on the one hand with the relation of man with man here and now, and on the other with man's transcendental quest. All that leads us away from the ultimate Reality constitutes *papa*.

The primitive people conceived of sin or evil as a pollution which was derived from contagion and could be removed by physical means. The *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* reveal traces of this external view of sin. Consciousness of morally evil things and of spiritual liberation emerged towards the middle Vedic epoch, especially from the thought of ascetic sages known as *munis* and *sramanas*. It is likely that the notion of *papa* as something morally evil originated among the pre-Vedic non-Aryan Indians. However, the word *papa* and some of its cognates, such as *agha*, *durita*, and *duskrita* occur in the *Rgveda*. The usual meaning of these words during this age was 'guilt', 'evil', or 'sin'. The *Rgveda* also mentions seven limits by trespassing even one of which a man may come to suffering. The text does not specify these limits which, however, are listed in the *Nirukta* in the following order: theft, violating the bed of the *guru*, murder of a *brahman*, causing abortion, drinking wine, continual practice of wickedness, and bearing false witness.

It is in the ascetic philosophies of liberation, chiefly represented by Jainism and Buddhism, that we find, for the first time, a clear and detailed treatment of the doctrine of *papa*—its sources, nature, consequences and means of eradication.

To Parshvanatha (circa 750 BC) is attributed the tenet of fourfold restraint (*chaturyama*) against transgressing the precepts of truth, inoffensiveness, stealing, and attachment to earthly possessions. Violation of any of these precepts constituted *papa*.

To this list Mahavira added incontinence as the fifth sin. The *Sutrakrtanga* lays down the general principles for all seekers of liberation to keep their souls away from evils. The *Avasyakasutra* gives a list of eighteen kinds of sin including killing, lying, stealing, sex-play, earthly possessions, anger, pride, illusion, greed, passion, hatred, etc.

The standard Buddhist decalogue has the following sinful pathways: killing living beings, stealing, sexual impurity, lying, slandering, speaking harshly, chattering frivolously, covetous thought, hostile thoughts, and false views. Two technical Pali terms, peculiar to Buddhism, are *abhithana* (deadly crime) and *annantariya-kamma* (an action bearing immediate retribution).

The *Apastamba-Dharmasutra* divides sins into two categories: those that cause loss of caste (*pataniya*) and those that cause impurity (*asuchikara*). In the first category are included theft of gold, drinking of wine, incest, etc., while the second category includes cohabitation by an Aryan woman with a *sudra*, eating meat of forbidden animal, e.g. a dog. The *Dharmasutras* considered voyage by sea as a sin leading to loss of caste. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Arjuna argues that there is sin in fighting with friends and evil in destroying one's family. Krsna in reply introduces the tenet of the indestructibility of the self and argues that by not carrying on righteous war Arjuna will lose his own *kartavya* (duty) and incur sin.

The notion of sin as a moral and religious evil predominates throughout the Sikh texts. Besides this, Sikhism also developed the notion of *papa* from the standpoint of theistic devotionalism. Forgetfulness of God is the greatest sin in Sikhism: "Those who turn away from the holy Master are renegades and evil; bound to their desires they ever suffer and avail not themselves of the chance (to get away from the path of sin)" (GG,

233). Sikhism does not attach significance to Brahmanical and other rituals and hence their non-observance does not constitute sin. Similarly, failure to live up to the norms of *varna* or *asrama* does not form the basis for sinfulness as Sikhism does not believe in these social distinctions. In other words, emphasis is laid not upon the sinfulness based on violation of rules of domestic ritual and of performance of caste duties, but upon the violation of the norms of piety and moral conduct.

The Sikh Scripture being a poetic composition, contains devotional hymns with moral teachings scattered throughout. The concept of sin or evil is not expressed either in a set text or by a particular word or phrase; the term *papa* is employed here because it has high frequency in common usage, and it is the most comprehensive term to cover various aspects of the concept of religious and moral evil.

Many other terms which could be accepted as synonyms or near-synonyms of *papa* occur in the Guru Granth Sahib. Some of these are; *mail* (impurity), *avagun* (vice), *burai* (evil) *kilbikh* (sin), *agh* (fault), *apavit* (unholy), *duratu* (misdeed), etc.

Among the sources of sin mentioned are the four rivers of vice and the three maladies. These four rivers are *hans, het, lobh, kop* (violence, attachment, avarice and wrath). The three maladies are *adhi, viadhi, upadhi*, which are maladies of mind and body.

The Sikh catalogue of vices contains, among others, the following: lust, anger, avarice, attachment to the world, pride, stealing, tyranny over others, injustice, slander, lying, cheating, self-praise, coveting others' wealth, and jealousy. A single term which comprehends the sinful tendency or nature is *manmukh*. It is opposed to another well-known term *gurmukh*. Scholars have usually translated the former as 'egocentric and

self-willed' or 'self-oriented', and the latter as 'God-ward turning'. This is a technical religious term with theological implications and we must emphasize its value from the soteriological rather than from the literal standpoint. A *manmukh* is a sinner not only because he makes his own laws and follows them wilfully, but chiefly because his will is opposed to God's will (*hukam*) and he disobeys divine commandments taught by the Guru.

Delusion (*moha*), avarice (*lobha*) and hatred (*dvesha*) are the three roots of evil recognized in the Buddhist tradition. This view is shared by all the Indian religions. Vaisnavite Vedanta teaches that lust (*kama*), anger (*krodha*), and avarice (*lobha*) constitute the three-fold gate to hell, to the ruin of the self. Actions inspired by passion (*lesyas*) and instincts (*sanjnas*) of food, sex-play, fear, and of possession are declared to be the mainsprings of sins in the Jaina tradition. The *Dharmasastras* state that a person incurs sin by neglecting the daily ceremonies of oblation to the fire (*agnihotra*), rites of purification, worship, and by doing what is prohibited, such as drinking wine, and by not restraining the senses. The *Kaushitaki-Brahmanopanisad* teaches the doctrine that God makes that man perform good deeds whom He wishes to raise to higher worlds than these, and He makes that man do bad deeds whom He wishes to drag down. This doctrine is accepted in the *Brahmasutra*, and Sankara in his commentary on this *sutra* argues that the Lord does so in accordance with the past deeds of that person. Sikhism traces the origin of everything in the world to the Creator. The origin of sin thus is a divine mystery.

Poison (evil) and *amrita* (good) were created by God Himself; He produced these two fruits on the tree of the world (GG, 1172). Illusion (*maya*) and attachment were created by God; He Himself produced delusion (GG, 67).

In another text are mentioned together God's law (*hukam*) and man's actions: Man's activity determines his destiny by operation of the law.

His law He operates, though the Divine pen writes according to the deeds of beings (GG, 1241). On the destructive nature of *papa* in man's life, a number of texts from the Guru Granth Sahib may be cited. Some of these are given below: Babar in his invasion of India (1521) is stated by Guru Nanak to have descended on India with the wedding party of sin, and to have "forcibly demanded the hand of the Indian womanhood" (GG, 722). This sin, of course, was rape and rapine by the aggressor. In relation to Babar's invasion also, contemplating the degeneration of the Indian ruling classes, given to accumulating lucre which now the invader snatched from them, he reflects: "Without sin is lucre not accumulated and with man it goes not at death" (GG, 417). Reflecting on the nature of the inevitable retribution for sin, Guru Arjan affirms: "You are engaged in sin, none shall be your friend (that is, when retribution comes)" (GG, 546). Says Guru Nanak: "Sinners like stones are sunk; by the Master's teaching will they be saved" (GG, 163).

Guru Nanak compares man's state to the bird's (GG, 934): "Those that pick up the essence of truth, suffer not. Those that rush picking up excessive grain, have their wings broken and their feet caught in snares. Their sins bring them to torment." Says Guru Nanak in Parbhati measure (GG, 1329): "Whoever keeps in bondage his evil

propensities, to him am I a sacrifice. One that discriminates not between evil and good, is verily straying about."

Haumai (egoism), according to Sikh thought, is the root cause of all evil impulses. *Haumai* is a type of spiritual blindness. Under its influence man becomes so much engrossed in the material world and the material self that he is unable to distinguish between the physical body and the real self, the *atman*. Being cut off from the real and pure self, he is now guided by the baser impulses of the material body which lead him from one evil to another. The more one gets enchanted by the allurement of carnal cravings, the thicker becomes the wall of *haumai*, till the light of *atman* is completely shut off and man becomes a plaything for cravings of the flesh.

The external view of sin recognized external means of its destruction. Thus some Vedic texts and most of the *dharmasastras* and *puranas* prescribe rituals of purification and ways of expiation. Offering oblation, performing sacrifices, bathing at holy places in holy waters, giving gifts to Brahmans and undergoing physical penances, are some of the means of destroying sin. Sikhism does not pay so much attention to this category of expiation (*prayaschitta*) of sins. Its expiatory emphasis is on prayer, contemplation (*simran*, *smarana*) and doing good to others. Engagement in beneficent actions, service (*seva*), is the best means of escaping sin and expiating for it. In this connection also is mentioned the triplicate formula of *nam, dan, ishnan* (contemplation of God, charity to others and the holy path). These are the cardinal duties and they ward off sin and its consequences.

The *Bhagavad-gita* strikes a new note in declaring that all sins are destroyed through loving devotion (*bhakti*) to God and through His favour (*prasada*). In addition to

these, this text declares true knowledge (*jnana*) as the greatest purifier. Purity of mind and body, performance of actions with an attitude of non-attachment to their results are also counted as ways of going beyond sins and bondage.

Great value is attached to Divine favour (*prasad, nadar, mihar* or *kirpa*) in Sikhism. God is the supreme purifier. He purifies even the most sinful beings through His compassion and grace. God's favour is attainable either through undivided love and faith, or through a true teacher (*guru*), as Guru Amar Das declares: "Utter the name of God, and contemplate in your mind, (then you will realize) that the impurity (of sins) is washed off through His grace" (GG, 230); and again: "Through the Guru's grace egoism is cast out, through his grace impurity (of sin) will not touch you" (GG, 230).

God's grace however is secured by doing good deeds, by keeping company with the holy (*sadhu-sangat*) and by ceaseless devotion to the Lord. The Guru Granth Sahib repeats several times the statement that "*suniai dukh pap ka nasu*—by listening (to holy teaching) are suffering and sin destroyed." The very name of God is auspicious and strikes away heaps of sin. "Like a tiny spark of fire that burns the entire bundle of firewood, God's holy Name purifies the body and destroys defilement in a moment." The very sight of the preceptor (Guru) is the door to deliverance. Defilements are not got rid of without guidance of the teacher. It is by enshrining the Lotus Feet (of the Lord) in one's heart that one can wash off the sins of many an existence. Company of the holy (*sat-sangati*), rendering service to them (*sant-tahal*; *sadh-seva*), realization of God (*brahma-gian*), practice of virtue, service of the teacher (*guru-sevana*) and sense-control are also recognized as efficient means of eradicating sin.

According to the Christian doctrine, man suffers from the original sin of transgression committed by Adam. He can be saved only by surrendering himself to Jesus Christ. This idea is foreign to Indian thought. While the Guru's grace is essential, man must work out his own liberation through prayer and good deeds. The idea of an intercessor common to the Semitic faiths is foreign to Sikhism. In Sikhism the Guru inspires devotion, but for release the devotee-seeker (*Sikh, jigiasu*) must depend on his own endeavour, from which there is no escape.

According to the teachings of Sikhism, thoughts, words or deeds based on egoity take one away from God. *Haumai* is annulled by *nam*, contemplation of God's Name, and *nam* is realized by grace of the Guru. When *nam* comes to abide in the mind, man is cleansed of all sins. When the mind is polluted by filth of sin, it can be washed clean by devotion to *nam* (*Japu*, 20).

Numerous texts can be cited to show that *kam* (lust), *krodh* (wrath), *ahankar* (pride), etc. have to be eradicated or subdued before *nam* can abide in one's heart. Man must shed lust, anger, falsehood, slander, greed for riches and the ego; again, one must get rid of the lust for woman, and worldly attachment; only then can one attain access to God even while living in this world of illusions. He must cleanse his mind of pride, of attachment to wife and children and of desire; only then, saith Nanak, shall the holy Lord abide in man's heart, and he can, through the Word, get merged in His Name (GG, 141).

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L. M. J.

PATH (**Taran Singh**), from the Sanskrit *patha* which means reading or recitation, is, in the religious context, reading or recitation of the holy texts. In Sikhism, it implies daily repetition of scriptural texts from the Guru Granth Sahib. Reading of certain *banis* is part of a Sikh's *nitnem* or daily religious regimen. *Path* of these prescribed texts is performed from a handy collection, called *gutka* (missal or breviary) or from memory. Three of the *banis*, Guru Nanak's *Japu* and Guru Gobind Singh's *Japu* and *Savaiye*—constitute the Sikhs mandatory morning path or devotions, and two—*Rahrasi* and *Kirtan Sohila*—evening *path*. Individuals add certain other texts as well such as *Shabad Hajare*, *Anandu* and *Sukhmani*. The *path* is also performed individually and more particularly in *sangat* from the Guru Granth Sahib itself. The Holy Volume is ceremonially installed under coverlets on a decorated seat resting on a raised platform, with a canopy above, and is opened by the *pathi* or reader who sits reverentially behind. Usually, another man stands in attendance, waving the flywhisk over the Holy Book. The *pathi* should have bathed and be dressed in clean clothes. Besides the reading of one single hymn to obtain *vak* or *hukamnama* (lesson or command for the day) or of some passages, three forms of complete *path* of the Guru Granth Sahib are current: *akhand* (unbroken recitation completed in forty-eight hours), *saptahik* (completed in a week) and *sadharan* or *sahij* (taken in slow parts with no time-limit for completion). A rarest variety is *ati akhand path*, hardly ever practised, in which a single participant reads within the prescribed 48 hours the entire text. Another variety is the *sampat path*. No time-limit is specified for it. Different schools and different groups or *pathis* have their own schedules. But the commonest factor in this variety of *path* is that a whole *sabda* or a portion of it from the holy text will be set apart for repetition after every full stanza or apportioned section of it

has been recited. Time-limit will thus be variable, depending upon the length of the verse or verses chosen for repetition. The hymn or portions of it chosen for repeated recitation will be governed by the occasion or purpose of the *path*. At certain places even the Mul Mantra is repeated with the chosen line or lines. The relay of *pathis* in this instance will naturally be larger than in the case of a normal *akhand path*.

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T. S.

PATIT (**W. O. Cole**), an adjective formed from *patan* meaning fall, decline or degradation, with its roots in Sanskrit *pat* which means, variously, "to fall, sink, descend; to fall in the moral sense; to lose caste, rank or position," usually denotes one who is morally fallen, wicked, degraded or outcaste. It is slightly different from the English word 'apostate', which usually stands for one who abandons his religion for another—voluntarily or under compulsion. A *patit* is one who commits a religious misdemeanour or transgression, yet does not forsake his professed faith. He may seek redemption and may be readmitted to the communion after due penitence.

In the sacred literature of the Sikhs as well as of the Hindus, the word is normally used in the general sense of fallen or sinner as opposed to pure or virtuous. It often appears in composite terms such as *patit-pavan* and *patit-udharan* (purifier or redeemer of the sinner) used as attributes of God and Guru. Its use as a technical term in Sikh theology appears to have come into vogue after the creation of the Khalsa and the appearance of various codes of conduct prescribed for the Sikhs in the form of *rahitnamas* during the eighteenth century. Even the *rahitnamas* describe transgressor of the code of conduct as *tankhahia* (one liable to penalty) and not *patit*. Bhai Santokh Singh (1787-1843) the poet-historian appears to be the first to use *patit* in the sense in which it is now understood among the Sikhs. In *ritu* 3, *ansu* 51 of his magnum opus, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, the poet relates a story, based on an anecdote from an earlier work, *Gur Ratan Mal* (*Sau Sakhi*), of a Sikh lady shaken in her faith under the influence of a Muslim woman, who is subsequently reclaimed. She is described as saying: *Bakhsh lehu ham tumari sharani*; *patitin pavanata bidhi barni* (we seek refuge with you [O Guru:]. Pardon us and tell us the way to purify *patits*). The Singh Sabha movement of

the last quarter of the nineteenth century had reclamation of the *patit* Sikhs as one of its major objectives. Shuddhi Sabha, an offshoot of the Singh Sabha, established in 1893, had as its sole purpose the reconversion of apostates, and reclamation of *patits*. By a *patit* was meant a Hindu or Sikh, man or woman, who had abandoned his/her traditional religious faith under Muslim or Christian influence. Also, an initiated Sikh who committed a major *kurahit* or breach of religious discipline, became a *patit*, while for minor breaches of the Sikh code, one only became a *tankhahia* or one liable to penalty or punishment whose misdemeanour could be condoned by *sangat* or holy fellowship after an apology, repentantly and humbly tendered, and/or a punishment, usually in the form of *tankhah* (fine) and/or *seva* (voluntary service) and extra recitation daily of one or more routine prayers. *Sikh Rahit Maryada* approved by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1954 after prolonged deliberations retains the above rules without specifically defining the term *patit*. Its legal definition as inserted in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, through the amending Act XI of 1944 runs as below:

"Patit means a person who being a Keshdhari Sikh trims or shaves his beard or *keshas* or who after taking *amrit* commits any one or more of the four *kurahits*."

Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1971, contains a similar definition except a reference to *keshadhari* because unlike Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, it defines only *keshadharis*, and not *sahajdharis*, as Sikhs. It states:

"Patit" means a Sikh who trims or shaves his beard or hair (*keshas*) or who after taking *amrit* commits any one or more of the four *kurahits*.

According to old *rahitnamas*, as well as the *Sikh Rahit Maryada*, the four (major) *kurahits* are (1) trimming or shaving of hair, (2) eating *kuttha* or *halal* meat, i.e. flesh of

bird or animal slaughtered in the Muslim's way; (3) sexual contact with a woman or man other than one's own wife or husband; and (4) the use of tobacco in any form.

Being a *patit* entails several religious, social and even legal disabilities. For example, besides being a religious offence punishable by *sangat*, being a *patit* is a social stigma; a *patit* cannot have his *ardas* said at any of the five *takhts*; and a *patit* cannot be elected to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. The *Sikh Rahit Maryada* advises Sikhs not to associate generally with *patits*. Especially, co-dining with a *patit* would make a Sikh *tankhahia*. A *patit* who fails to appear before the *sangat* when summoned, or who refuses to accept its verdict could invite punishment leading to his excommunication from Sikh society. The power of excommunication however vests only in the Akal Takht at Amritsar, the highest seat of religious authority, and is exercised in exceptional cases involving eminent persons and *panthic* honour. Of course, the sanction behind such punishments and disabilities is purely religious, moral and social pressure, except in cases falling under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act.

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W. O. C.

PUNN (**L. M. Joshi**) a concept in the Indian tradition carrying simultaneously ethical, spiritual and philosophical connotations. As an ethical concept it implies voluntary obedience to the moral rules of conduct which have the sanction of a system of reward and punishment. As spiritual attitude, it is the inclination of the self towards a virtuous and ascetic living. As a metaphysical concept, it implies purity, holiness and goodness. Conceived as a value, *punn* is the subtle result of righteous actions which influence not only the doer's present life, but also his eschatological state.

The word *punn* (Prakrit *punna*, Pali *punna*, Sanskrit *punya*) is derived from the root *pu,* meaning 'to purify' or 'to make clear'. *Punn* is that action which purifies the self (*atman*) or the stream of life. The consequence of a pure action is pleasant and purifying not only for the doer but also for others. Any action which brings about desirable results, such as peace, prosperity, and happiness, that which is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end is indeed *punn*. In the sacred literature and lexicons of India we find this word used as a synonym of *guna, subha, kusala, sukrta*, *dharma, pavana* and *sreyas*. Translated into English these words mean 'virtue', 'auspicious', 'good', 'noble deed', 'righteousness', 'pure' and 'preferable'. The term *punn* will perhaps best translate as right-doing—a meritorious action.

The word *punya* occurs in the *Rgveda*, though not in its later religious sense. The *Atharvaveda* mentions '*pure world*s' (*punyansca lokan*) while the *Satapatha Brahmana* refers to 'religious works' (*punya-karma*) such as horse-sacrifice performed by the Pariksitas. The *Chandogya Upanisad* attributes birth in higher state as the human to good conduct (*ramaniyacharanah*) and birth as a boar or a *candala* to bad conduct (*kapuyacharanah*). The *Brhadaranyakopanisad* states that a person becomes pious

(*punya*) by pious deeds (*punyena karmana*). The early Upanisads also mention austerity (*tapas*) as a virtue. Study of the Vedas, sacrifice, almsgiving, and fasting are meritorious, but they are inferior to the knowledge of the Absolute (*Brahman*).

It is in the early Buddhist sources that the doctrine of merit is set down for the first time as an essential element in religious culture. Here a clear distinction is made between virtues or good qualities and their merit. Thus it is stated in the *Dighanikaya* that "merit (*punya*) grows by the cultivation of good qualities (*kusala dharma*)." The "foundations of meritorious deeds" (*punya-kriya-vastu*) are discussed minutely in the Buddhist texts. The three virtuous practices that contribute to merit are liberality (*dana*), good conduct (*sila*) and meditation (*dhyana*). Merit is often represented as the foundation and condition of birth in good states (*sugati*) and in heaven (*svarga*). Liberality, self-denial, self-restraint, truthful speech, austerity, continence, study of the doctrine, renunciation, friendliness, loving kindness, impartiality, serene joy, knowledge, right views, pure intention, forbearance and meditational achievements are some of the qualities contributing to merit. The Buddha is honoured as the embodiment of the supreme perfection of all meritorious virtues. Those bereft of merit are compared to the wood in the cremation ground. Absence of greed, of delusion, and of hatred is auspicious (*subha*) and leads to good states (*sugati*) and happiness (*sukha*). *Punya* is often compared to nectar, the antidote to living in hell and death. Human beings are purified not by birth or wealth, but by good deeds, knowledge, righteousness, and moral conduct. *Sila* or pure conduct is the basis of the entire religious life. The Emperor Asoka taught that one can obtain infinite merit (*anantam punyam*) by the gift of righteousness (*dhammadana*).

The Jaina attitude towards merit (*punya*) deserves special notice. Human beings have three dispositions (*bhava*): good (*subha*), bad (*asubha*) and pure (*suddha*). The first is the cause of religious merit (*punya*), the second of sinfulness (*apunya*) and the third of liberation (*nivrtti*). The sage (*yogin*), leaving both good and bad, establishes himself in the pure disposition. In the Jaina theory *karma*, whether meritorious or unmeritorious, results in bondage. For those who desire ultimate release (*moksa*), even *punya* is an obstacle; a shackle, whether of iron or of gold, is a shackle which binds. The argument is that the doer will have to remain in transmigration (*sansara*) in order to enjoy the fruition of his good works even if he be born in heavenly states. Unlike the religions of West Asian origin, the religions of Indian origin do not consider life in heaven as the highest goal.

Moksa being too high an ideal for the commonality of people, birth in good states of existence (*yoni*), whether in the divine or the human world (*loka*), is the generally cherished ideal. Merit (*punya*) is the sure means of getting into these existences. Hence, compassion, renunciation, fasting, penance, sense-control and almsgiving are recommended to the laity. Some Jaina texts distinguish between two types of merit; one founded on the 'right view' (*samyagdrsti*) and the other founded on the 'false view' (*mithyadrsti*); the former leads to liberation.

The *Mahabharata*, the Smrtis and the Puranas describe in detail the means of producing merits and the rewards they lead to. Going on pilgrimage to holy places (*tirthas*), bathing in sacred rivers (*snana*) and keeping various vows (*vratas*) and fasts (*upavasas*) are not the only ways of earning merit. Great emphasis is laid on the cultivation of moral qualities. According to these texts one obtains the full reward of

pilgrimage and holy bath only when one is compassionate towards all beings and is pure and keeps one's senses under control. Truthfulness, austerity, charity, celibacy, contentment, forbearance, sweet speech, and straightforwardness are the real *tirthas* that purify a being and beget merit. The *Bhagavadgita* lays down that one should perform one's assigned duty (*sva-dharma*) in order to obtain excellent rewards. Among other things, death in battle is declared to be meritorious and resulting in birth in the heaven. An enlightened sage, *sthitaprajna*, however, is described as being untouched by good (*subha*) and evil (*asubha*) things.

The belief that merits travel with the self wherever reborn is common to all the religions of Indian origin. Spiritual merit is the only companion of a being in the next world (*paraloka*). Therefore, one should accumulate spiritual merits.

It will be incorrect to assume, however, that merits are accumulated only for the enjoyment of rewards in a future life. Some people may earn merits by doing good works with a view to gaining a good reputation and glory in this very life. Some people may perform meritorious deeds for destroying their sins, while a few might be inspired to pursue merits out of love and reverence for piety or with a view to growing in holiness. An important reason behind the accumulation of merits may be the desire to get and possess enormous supernatural powers. This is especially true of numerous figures of India's legendary and mythical past. The name of such, as a king like Harischandra, a *brahmana* seer like Visvamitra, or an ascetic sage like Kapilamuni, represent a whole series of beings, either mythical, semi-historical or wholly imaginary, whose supernatural exploits occupy hundreds of pages of the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*. Like the

practice of *yoga*, merits were stored for secular purposes also—victory in war, immunity from disease or curse, control over the forces of nature, such as rain and storm, and so on.

Certain faiths have paid little heed to this doctrine of merits. Among them may be counted the Bhaktimarga of India and the Sufism of Persia. Although faith and love are the dominant notes of the sects of Bhakti tradition of India, it will be wrong to say that they overlooked virtues like ethical excellence, compassion, and liberality. In the teachings of Kabir and Tulsidasa, who are among the greatest name in the Bhakti tradition, the value of good works, of altruistic ethics, has never been lost sight of.

How shall we define *punn* in Sikhism of which *bhakti* or devotion constitutes such an important factor? All those deeds of body, mind and speech which conduce to constant mindfulness of the Divine Reality are meritorious from the standpoint of Sikhism. The ideal person, in Sikh vocabulary, *gurmukh*, is the embodiment of moral and spiritual virtues. He lives, moves and has his being in the Timeless Being. In verse after verse in the Guru Granth Sahib he is eulogized for this moral excellence and blameless behaviour towards his fellow beings.

The God-inspired person (*gurmukh*) is not only a devotee or 'a sharer in Divine Glory' (*bhagat*). As stated in the *Siddha-Gosti* (stanzas 35-42), the *gurmukh* is engaged in meditation, in dispensing charities and purifying himself with the holy bath. He is enlightened and endeavours, like Ramachandra, in the way of God fighting against evil forces. He has the true discrimination and his transmigration is annulled. In devotion to the holy Lord, his egoism is consumed; by such devotion he is exalted. The Guru Granth Sahib refers to meritorious work as *punn, sukrt, gun, bhali-kar* and *nam-simran* ('merit', 'pious action', 'virtue', 'good deed', and 'the mindfulness of God') in different contexts.

The message of the Teachers of the Sikh tradition is that faith in and love of the one Divine Reality must go along with morally good works of the body, mind and speech. "Without doing good no *bhakti* can be" (*Japu*, 21).

The foremost work of merit (*punn*) is, of course, constant awareness of God. This is the root of all the other merits; without this other good works are of little avail.

A person gets little honour through pilgrimage, austerity, mercy and liberal gifts; it is the hearing, accepting and meditating (on the Divine Essence) which is the real bathing in the innermost sanctum.

Holy bathing, austerities, compassion, charity—are all approved if these bring even a grain of true merit.

True merit lies in absorbing holy teaching, faith and devotion—

That will be the holy purifying bath of the Soul.

And without devotion to God,

No liberation can be (GG, 260).

The fact is that the *gurmukh* or God-inspired person is described as 'undefiled' (*nirmalu*), 'pure' (*sucha*), 'self-controlled' (*sanjami*), 'self-investigator' (*parakhu*), 'contented' (*santokhi*), possessed of the knowledge of sacred texts (*sastar-simiriti-ved*), one who has forsaken hatred (*vair*) and opposition (*virodh*), one who has eradicated all reckoning of complaint, hostility, and revenge (*sagali ganat mitavai*) against others, and as one who is rejoicing in the fervour of Divine Name (*ramnam rangi rata*).

The doctrine of grace has a place of special significance in Sikh thought. The compassionate attitude or favourable disposition of God (*nadar, kirpa, prasad, mihar*) is essential even for doing meritorious works, or for avoiding evil:

Through the Guru's grace alone may one become pure and clean (GG, 158).

Virtuous conduct and even devotion to God is obtained through His favour:

Whosoever He elects to his favour becomes exalted. Through the Guru's grace God's Name abides in his heart (GG, 159).

One of the highest virtues, according to Guru Nanak, is to have complete control over one's *mana* (mind)—"one who has conquered his mind, has conquered the world" (GG, 6). The sum total of such scriptural affirmations is that it is through God's favour or direction that one becomes virtuous, that merit is accumulated through Divine grace. However this does not mean that in Sikhism there is no room for the exercise of free will in the practice of virtuous life.

It has, rather, been repeatedly emphasized in *gurbani* that human life is the chance provided to man for acquiring that which is the sole aim of all creatures, that is, communion with the Creator.

This emphasis on Divine favour (*nadar, prasad*), however, does not amount to predestinarianism and fatalism. In the Sikh Scripture the emphasis on ethical and moral teachings is very pronounced, making it clear beyond doubt that every individual is responsible for his actions, good or bad; and that he will get the reward accordingly:

Deeds good and bad will be weighed in the presence of the Law-maker; some will be judged to be close, others far apart. According to their actions will they be assigned their ranks (GG, 8).

Divine grace is not bestowed upon unworthy persons; one has to be virtuous to deserve favour of the Lord, though grace is essential to acquire purity, or to accumulate

punn. But it comes to the lot of those alone who seek it and make themselves worthy of it.

The crucial question is raised in the Scripture: "In the face of both sin and virtue as our witnesses, what prayer can avail us" (GG, 35l)? Prayer bears fruit only when it is accompanied by good life. "Doing good deeds (*sukrt*) and remembering God one will not step out in the direction of hell" (GG, 461). It is the meekest and the humblest, those who rejoice in the dust of the feet of the sages (*jan-dhuri*), that obtain the Supreme state (*paramgati*).

We read in the Guru Granth Sahib: "Salute, with joined palms, that brings great merit; prostrate before them, and you will thereby accumulate much merit" (GG, 13).

The Sikh list of merits includes virtues such as mindfulness of God, spirit of detachment (*bairagu*), truthfulness, contentment, doing good deeds, restraint of the senses, righteous conduct, patience, faith, compassion, humility, fear of sin, chastity, scriptural study, liberality, knowledge, understanding, and desire for ultimate release (*mokhu*), etc.

But the greatest virtue is the destruction of *haumai* (self-centredness or egoity). "A man may do millions of virtuous deeds, but if he feels proud of his meritorious acts, all his efforts go waste. He may practise numerous austerities, but if he falls a prey to conceit, he will continue in the circle of rebirth in a good or bad state" (GG, 278). *Haumai* (egoity), thus, annihilates all *punn* or merit, and according to Sikhism, one cannot be virtuous unless one discards one's *haumai*.

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L. M J.

QUDRAT (**G. S. Talib**) (spelled *qudrati* in *gurbani*), a term adopted by Guru Nanak from the Arabic and given a philosophical signification and connotation which, to some extent but with different shades of sense, had till then been conveyed by the millennia-old Indian words *prakriti* and *maya*. *Qudrat*, in Arabic, literally means power, might. In the Turkish language, the word came to mean power, strength, omnipotence of God, as also Creation. The same term, in Persian, denotes power, potency, authority of God, the Creation, Universe, Nature. In Arabic, the term *qudrat* connotes "that which is under the power and authority of" its Master, God, who, in the *Quran*, has been given the attributes of *al-qadir*, *al-qadir* (both standing for "mighty") *and al-khaliq*, Creator. Guru Nanak has employed the term *qudrat* to include both these Quranic attributes of God, *al-qadir* and *al-khaliq*.

Guru Nanak employed the term *qudrat* to denote the idea of Divine might. There was presumably also the need to find a parallel for *prakriti* which in Indian thought was postulated as co-eternal with *Purusa*. Moreover, in Guru Nanak's vocabulary, parallels from Perso-Arabic sources are freely used as these were current among the common mass of people. This was also in keeping with his spirit of tolerance. Many examples such as *sahib, pir, mir* and *khasam* can be cited. Guru Nanak's religious system, based on the One absolute Purakh as the matrix of the world, did not accept the dualism of *purusa* and *prakriti* of *Sankhya Karika* which, broadly speaking, corresponds to the concepts of subject and object, or duality of mind and matter or life and nature. In his philosophical system, the world has a Creator, and Nature being what is created has no absolute basis independent of and apart from the Karta Purakh. Nature as such is merely an extension of or an emanation from Purakh. Neither the Vedic Purusa nor the Purusa of Sankhya is

the Creator or Controller of the world. In Guru Nanak's system, He is both the Creator and the Controller. *Qudrat* is the created object, the Creator's might. Here *qudrat* stands for the material phenomena as well as for power, might, strength, wonder-working omnipotence, the authority of God. In Guru Nanak's view, the potentiality and faculty of recreation as well as the varied forms and phenomena of the world are *qudrat* or *maya*. The term *maya* has been rendered as illusion, unreality, deception, material entanglements, etc. It is held to imply, so far as creation is concerned, the phantasmagoria or hallucination of appearances. In fact, in Indian philosophy, *maya* signifies the process by which unity becomes multiplicity and homogeneity heterogeneity, in the unfolding of the cosmos. It is the answer to the enigma of the multiplicity of forms, in which the world appears to us. God instantly creates uncountable forms through His power of *qudrat*—"*anik rup khin mahi qudrati dharada*"(GG, 519).

In the compositions of Guru Nanak, as also of his successors in the holy office of Guruship, *qudrat* stands for what is meant in general by this term in India, Divine might. It had in that context a philosophical signification, but because of the term becoming common current coin, its philosophical reference was not called to mind, as also in the parallel case of *maya*. In a few contexts, Guru Nanak also used it in the extended sense of creation, of whatever is manifested by the operation of Divine might. In *Var Asa* in the line—*balihari qudrati vasia tera antu na jai lakhia* (GG, 469)—*qudrat* obviously implies what the Divine might has created, in what it is pervasive. In *Majh ki Var*, line "*ape qudrati saji kai ape kare bicharu*" (GG, 143), again *qudrat* is creation, phenomena, the manifest world. Apart from a few such contexts, *qudrat* generally in *gurbani* stands

for Divine might. That is also the sense in which the generality of people in India use it. That only indicates that the Guru had adopted a term from common everyday usage that was familiar, and used it, without necessarily any thought of preferring it over *maya* on any philosophical grounds. As a matter of fact, the world of reference, the context and background of the two terms are distinct. *Maya* has always a clear or implied ethico-philosophical meaning in *gurbani*. Wherever it stands for phenomena, *qudrat* is used as a neutral term, free from any pejorative suggestion. Hence the two terms cannot be studied as parallel beyond a certain point.

Guru Nanak says that for millions and trillions of aeons there was utter darkness and only the Infinite One, in its unmanifest form existed, (GG, 1035). However, then the unmanifest Real One, who is self-existent, created *qudrat—apinai apu sajio apinai rachio nau, dui qudrati sajiai kari asanu ditho chau* (GG, 463). However, *qudrat* is intrinsically one with its Creator because the latter is manifest in it, though the two cannot be termed identical or co-eternal.

Guru Nanak also holds that *qudrat*, as power and might, acts as the regulator of the working of all the entities and forces of Nature. Fear or *bhay* controls all forces of Nature such as winds, waters, fires, the earth, clouds, sun, moon, the firmament, as also the *siddhas*, the *buddhas* and *yogis* or heroes and brave warriors and ordinary people (GG, 461).

In the Guru Granth Sahib, creation has been accepted as real, true, mighty, sublime, wonderful and law-abiding, yet there is no tendency towards animation, personification or deification of the forces and manifestations of Nature, as has been the case with the Vedic deities or in Greek mythology. Nature worship, in any form, is non-

existent in the Sikh faith. In that stanza of unsurpassed beauty and conception, in the *Sodar*, all forces of Nature such as water, wind, and fire, all gods such as Siva, Brahma and Visnu, such objects as the seas and mountains are shown as praising the Lord and working in unison, according to His will. However, it is not unoften that some instruction or inspiration has been drawn from certain relationships, existing or supposed to be existing, in nature and cosmos. But this tends towards poetic imagery and not towards philosophy or theology.

No proofs have been set out in the Guru Granth Sahib for the existence of God, which has been accepted self-evidently; but sometimes, cosmic reality and nature have been cited as proofs of the existence of the Supreme Consciousness working behind phenomena. The *lila*, play, *pasara*, expansion, *rachana*, creation of *qudrat*, have come out of the *sunn* (*Sunya*), the vacuum which is filled with Divine Reality (GG, 1037).

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G. S. T.

RAHIT MARYADA (**S. P. Kaur**), traditions and rules which govern the distinctive Sikh way of life and determine Sikh belief and practice. *Rahit*, from the Punjabi verb *rahina* (to live to remain), means mode of living while *maryada* is a Sanskrit word composed of *marya* (limit, boundary, mark) and *ada* (to give to oneself, to accept, to undertake), meaning bounds or limits of morality and propriety, rule or custom. Guru Nanak, who founded the Sikh faith, and his nine successors who nurtured the community during the first two centuries of its existence, not only set for their followers a strict moral standard, but also a distinctive pattern of personal appearance and social behaviour. The tenets of Sikh faith and rules of conduct are not set in any formal treatise, but are scattered in their Scripture and other religious texts and in their historical records. Attempting systematic statements of rules several *rahitnamas* or codes of conduct appeared during the eighteenth century after the promulgation by Guru Gobind Singh of Khalsa *rahit* or discipline. Another similar and more detailed work of the same period is the anonymous *Prem Sumarag*. Some general rules regarding Sikh *rahit* are also contained in various *hukamnamas* (decrees or rules in the form of letters) of the Gurus. Important features of Sikh *rahit maryada* may be summed up under the titles: physical appearance; religious beliefs and observances; moral conduct; and social behaviour.

The first mark of religious investiture of a Sikh personality is *kes*, i.e. unshorn hair of the head covered with a turban, and an untrimmed beard. *Kes* is one of the five symbols which every regular, initiated Sikh must adopt, the other four being *kangha* (comb in the hair), *kara* (steel bangle), *kachchh* (shorts) and *kirpan* (sword), collectively known as the five K's, each beginning with the letter "K". These were the physical features of the *rahit* prescribed for Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh when he administered

the rites of initiation to the first Five admitted to the Khalsa brotherhood on the Baisakhi day (March 30) of AD 1699. They were signs of the bond that linked the Sikh community together and gave it its distinctive identity. They were a declaration of privilege as also of the intent to be prepared steadfastly to uphold the ideals the Guru had demarcated.

Belief in One Infinite Timeless and Formless Creator God is fundamental to a Sikh's religious creed. His worship is addressed to Him to the exclusion of any incarnations of the divine, the gods and goddesses, idols and images. His devotional practice consists in rising early and reciting his morning prayers after bathing, joining the *sangat* or holy fellowship in *gurdwara*, listening to the Guru's word, and meditating upon God's Name. Guru for the Sikh is Guru Nanak and his nine spiritual successors and, then, the Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Book ordained Guru by Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X. A Sikh believes in the oneness of the Ten Gurus—all of one light, all one in spirit though different in body. He bows in all circumstances to God's Will (*hukam*) and has faith in His compassion (*daya*) and grace (*nadar*). He treats his birth as a *hukam*, being a gift from God and a rare opportunity for his moral and spiritual evolution. Active participation in life as a householder is, therefore, preferred to asceticism. Yet one must live in the world like the lotus which emerges from the mud pure and spotless. *Rahitnamas* as well as the religious texts adjure one specifically to be truthful, honest and humble and not to steal, gamble cheat or slander. Special emphasis is laid on virtuous sexual behaviour. A Sikh male is to treat all women other than his spouse as mothers, sisters and daughters. A Sikh female is similarly required to be chaste and morally blameless. Sikhs do not smoke and are not to consume drugs and intoxicants.

A Sikh regards all human beings as equal. The Gurus enjoined him to recognize all mankind as one. They rejected the caste system. "False," said Guru Nanak, "is caste, and false the titled fame. One Supreme Lord sustaineth all" (GG, 83). The Sikh institutions of *sangat* (fellowship) and *pangat* (commensality) invalidate distinctions based on birth or social position. Women among the Sikhs enjoy equal status with men. The Gurus disapproved of the practice of *sati* (burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her husband's body prevalent among the Hindus). The *rahitnamas* expressly lay down injunctions against those who practise female infanticide. A practical and positive step towards the realization of universal brotherhood is the Sikh emphasis on *seva* (disinterested service) which extends from labour of the hands in Guru ka Langar or community kitchen to hospitality and charity and to readiness to making any sacrifice to help the oppressed and relieve their distress. The essentials of Sikh message can be summed up from three perspectives: loving involvement with God's revelation through *nam*, i.e. remembrance or repetition of His Name, straining for the achievement of basic needs, and holding as common possession the fruits of one's labour—partaking of them only upon having dealt with the needs especially of the indigent. In Sikh system, these norms are represented by the three principles: *nam japna, kirat karni* and *vand chhakna*.

Sikh *rahit* as based on the teachings of the Gurus and *rahitnamas* became lax during the comparative ease and prosperity of Sikh rule in the Punjab. Leaders of the reformatory movements such as Nirankari, Namdhari and Singh Sabha during the latter half of the nineteenth century sought to restore the purity of belief and living a pattern in consonance with Sikh tenets. New codes and manuals appeared, especially under the auspices of the Singh Sabha. Fundamentalist in approach was *Khalsa Rahit Prakash*

adopted at an open meeting by Panch Khalsa Diwan at Damdama Sahib on 13 April 1905, and later released by Babu Teja Singh. At the other extreme, making many a concession to Brahmanical practice, was Avtar Singh Vahiria's *Khalsa Dharam Shastra*: *Sanskar Bhag issued* in 1894, but later enlarged into *Khalsa Religious National Law*, and published in 1914. In between lay the Chief Khalsa Diwan's *Gurmat Prakash: Bhag Sanskar*, first issued in 1915. More widely accepted and authoritative codes were prepared under the aegis of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, originally established on 15 November 1920 to take over management of Sikh shrines and recognized as a statutory body representing the entire Sikh community under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925. On 15 March 1927, it appointed a 28-member Rahu-rit (i.e. *rahit maryada*) sub-committee "to prepare a draft *rahu-rit* in the light of *rahitnamas* and other Sikh texts and in consultation with leading Sikh scholars." Later, the task was entrusted to Professor Teja Singh, of Khalsa College, Amritsar, who prepared a draft which was published in the April 1931 issue of the *Gurdwara Gazette*, the official organ of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, for eliciting public opinion. The Rahu-rit sub-committee considered the draft as well as the comments received from various quarters at its meetings held at Sri Akal Takht on 4-5 October 1931, 3 January 1932 and 31 January 1932. The final version, after being referred to Sarb Hind (i.e. All-India) Sikh Mission Board and further amended by Dharmik Salahkar (i.e. Religious Advisory) Committee received final approval by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee on 3 February 1945. It was then published under the title *Sikh Rahit Maryada*. The manual defines a Sikh as "a person who has faith in the One Timeless Being, the Ten Gurus (from Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Sri Guru Gobind Singh), Sri Guru Granth Sahib,

their *bani* (i.e. sacred hymns) and teachings, and in the *amrit* of the Tenth Master, and who does not follow any other religion." The Sikh *rahit* is divided into *shakhsi* (individual) and *panthic* (communal). The former is further dealt with under *nam-bani da abhyas* (religious practice), *gurmat di rahini* (living according to the Gurus' instructions) and *seva* (service). Detailed instructions are given about the *nitnem* or daily prayers, the form of *ardas* or supplicatory prayer, and how to act in the *sangat* and in the *gurdwara*. Instructions regarding the time-bound and open-ended reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, *karah prasad* (sacred food or sacrament) and *katha*, i.e. discourse on the Scripture as well as rules of social and moral conduct and ceremonies such as those concerning birth, marriage and death are also given in this section. The section on *panthic rahini* includes sub-sections on Guru Panth (the Sikh community or the Khalsa); initiation ceremony of the Khalsa; procedure for *gurmata* or formal resolution adopted in the presence of the Guru; and, finally, authority of the Akal Takht to hear and decide on appeals against the decisions of local *sangats*.

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S. P. K.

RAHITNAME (**Taran Singh**), plural of *rahitnama* (*rahit*= conduct, stipulated conduct or way of life: *name* letters, writings, manuals) is a term used in Punjabi in reference to a *genre* of writings specifying approved way of life for a Sikh. These writings, enunciating conduct and behaviour in accordance with the principles of the Sikh religion contain instructions regarding personal and social behaviour, applicable especially to those who have been admitted to the Khalsa brotherhood through ceremonies by the double-edged sword. Sikhism laid as much stress on correct personal conduct as on the purity of mind. Guru Nanak for whom truth is synonymous with God recognizes the sovereignty of conduct (GG, 62). "His conduct will alone be pure who cherishes Him in his heart," says Guru Nanak in another of his hymns (GG, 831). And "*rahini*, i.e. conduct moulded in accordance with *sabda*, is the truest conduct" (GG, 56). *Rahit* as right thinking and right action is also distinguished from *rahit* as outward formal appearance by Guru Arjan, Nanak V: "(The misguided one) acts differently from the *rahit* he proclaims; he pretends love (for God) without devotion in his heart; (but) the Omniscient Lord knows all and is not beguiled by external form" (GG, 169). Besides these general statements, more specific instructions for the moral guidance of a believer are found scattered throughout the Sikh scriptures.

The literature containing the *rahit* can broadly be divided into three categories—the textual source which includes Sikh scriptures, other approved Sikh canon, and *hukamnamas*; the traditional Sikh history including *janam sakhis*, *gurbilases* and Guru Gobind Singh's own announcement not to have a personal successor and to pass on the guruship jointly and permanently to the *granth* (the Guru Granth Sahib) and the *panth* (Khalsa Brotherhood). The textual sources with such precepts as can be extrapolated

from them are accepted as general constituents of the Sikh *rahit*. Among the sources of traditional Sikh history, the most important are the utterances traced directly to the Gurus, especially Guru Gobind Singh who laid down, at the time of the inauguration of the Khalsa in 1699, rules of conduct and introduced regulations to confer upon his followers a distinctive identity. However, these sources do not, strictly speaking, belong to the genre known as *rahitnamas*. Bhai Nand Lal and some other Sikhs contemporary or near-contemporary with Guru Gobind Singh compiled the first *rahitnamas*. The chief Khalsa Diwan's *Gurmat Prakash Bhag Sanskar* (Amritsar, 1915), Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Amritsar, 1950) and the English translation *Rahit Maryada: A Guide to the Sikh Way of Life* (London, 1971) are the modern versions of *rahitnamas*.

The authorship and dates of composition of some of the latter-day *rahitnamas* are not above dispute: interpolations are not ruled out, either. Most of these works are ascribed to Sikhs closely connected with Guru Gobind Singh; they are in some instances described as dictated or authenticated by the Guru himself. However, these claims or that they belong to the 1 7th or early 18th century do not stand strict scrutiny.

Three of Bhai Nand Lal's works fall in the category of *rahitnamas*. *Rahitnama Bhai Nand Lal*, in Sadhukari verse, is in the form of a dialogue between the poet and Guru Gobind Singh during which the latter expounds the rules of conduct laid down for a *gursikh* or true follower of the faith. The penultimate verse (22) of the *Rahitnama* indicates that this dialogue took place at Anandpur on 5 December 1695, i.e. before the creation of the Khalsa. That explains the absence from it of any reference to *panj-kakari rahit*, i.e. the five-symbol discipline of the Khalsa. In the text every Sikh is enjoined to

rise early in the morning, take his bath and, having recited *Japu* and *Jap*, to go to see the Guru among the *sangat* and to listen attentively to the holy word being expounded. He should attend the evening service comprising *Rahrasi*, *Kirtan* (or *Kirtan Sohila*) and discourse. In answer to Nand Lal's request to elaborate the phrase "*Guru's darshan"* i.e. a sight of the Guru, the latter explains that the Guru has three aspects, first *nirguna* (without attributes or transcendent), the second *sarguna* (with attributes or qualities) and *gursabda*, (the Guru in form of *sabda*). The first (Vahiguru) is beyond sensory perception, but Guru in the second form can be seen manifested in the entire creation or more concretely in (Guru) Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture. "Whoever wishes to see me," said Guru Gobind Singh, "should see Granthji and should listen attentively to and reflect upon the Guru's word contained in it." His third form, explained the Guru, is his Sikh. "A Gursikh who having totally banished his ego dedicates himself whole-heartedly to service and observes these rules truly represents me."

In format, language and style, Bhai Nand Lal's *Tankhahnama*, his second work, follows the same model as his *Rahitnama*, but in content it deals directly with rules and injunctions, especially those breach of which attracts a religious penalty, *tankhah* in Sikh terminology. Punishment prescribed in this *Tankhahnama* is neither corporeal nor pecuniary, but consists in Guru's displeasure or imprecation. Who becomes liable to *tankhah*? He who ignores *nam, dan* and *isnana* (glorification of God's name, charity, holy bath); who joins not regularly the *satsang* or holy fellowship; who allows his mind to wander while sitting among the company of the holy; who expresses hatred for a poor member of the community; who does not bow to the *sabda*; who is selfish and greedy while distributing *karah prasad* or the holy communion; who puts on the rulers' Turkish

turban; who touches a sword with the toe; who distributes karah prasad or *langar* without being in full regalia; who dons red apparel; who uses tobacco-snuff; who looks lasciviously upon the womenfolk; who is easily enraged; who gives a daughter or sister in marriage for money; who wears not the sword; who deprives a helpless person of his money or belongings; who pays not the *dasvandh* or tithe; who bathes not in cold water; who eats supper without reciting the *Rahrasi*; who goes to sleep at night without reciting the *Kirtan Sohila*; who stands not by his word; who combs not his hair twice daily; who ties not his turban afresh every day; who brushes not the teeth regularly; who slanders others; who eats flesh of an animal slaughtered slowly in the Muslim way; who sings compositions other than those of the Gurus; who attends performances by dancing girls; who goes to his work without a prayer to the Guru; who breaks his fast without making an offering to the Guru; who commits adultery; who gives not alms to the deserving; who indulges in abuse; who gambles; who hears without protest calumny against the Guru; who earns his livelihood by cheating others; who eats without uttering the word *Vahiguru*; who visits a prostitute; who moves about with head uncovered; who heeds not the Guru's word; and so on.

Although *Tankhahnama* refers to the Khalsa as an established order of devoutly religious warriors, it makes no reference to its five symbols or to the taboos. Besides religious and moral practices of a general nature, it alludes to rules of personal and social etiquette, even of personal hygiene. The last verse of *Tankhahnama*, which the Sikhs usually recite in unison after *ardas*, contains the well-familiar litany, *Raj karega khalsa*. .

Sakhi Rahit Ki, also ascribed to Bhai Nand Lal, is a summary in Punjabi prose of a dialogue between Bhai Nand Lal and Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru adjures his Khalsa to bow only before the Guru's word and shun Brahmanical beliefs, rites and rituals. Use of tobacco and trimming or shaving of hair are prohibited. So are adultery, thieving, backbiting and slander. Positive injunctions include early rising, daily ablutions, reciting *nitnem*, honest work, love of *sabda* and hospitality.

Rahitnama Bhai Prahilad Singh is a short poem comprising 38 couplets. It is anachronistically dated at Abchalnagar (Nanded) in 1695 when Guru Gobind Singh was still in Anandpur. Prahilad Singh, Prahilad Rai before his initiation as a Singh, was a scholarly Brahman who at the instance of Guru Gobind Singh rendered into *bhakha* vernacular 50 Upanisads which Prince Dara Shukoh had got translated into Persian. His *Rahitnama* forbids a Sikh to wear a cap or a *janeu*, the sacred thread of the caste Hindus. It forbids association with *masands*, with the heretic sect called Minas, with those who shave their heads or with those who practise female infanticide. Use of snuff is also forbidden. The Sikhs must shun idolatry and the worship of graves. They must have faith only in God, the Guru Granth Sahib, and the Guru-Khalsa.

Rahitnama Bhai Daya Singh presents in prose, to begin with, the rules of conduct as coming from the lips of Guru Gobind Singh himself; in this case the author is the first among the Panj Piare. The reference in it to Muktsar and Abchalnagar, injunction against the learning of Persian and Sanskrit and the mythical origin of the ceremony of *amrit* create doubts about its authorship. Besides the usual injunctions regarding the recitation of *nitnem*, the five symbols of the Khalsa, the K's, *nam simaran*, etc., and those prohibiting idolatry and Brahmanical practices, the distinctive features of this *Rahitnama*

are: the description of how *amrit* is prepared and administered; proclamation that Khalsa is the incarnation of God; the names of the five Muktas; prescription of fine and corporeal punishment for certain religious offences, and procedure for the redemption of offenders; recognition of Granth-Panth as Guru; inclusion of Dhirmallias and Ram Raias among the fallen sects to be boycotted socially; and minutiae with regard to some minor prescriptions and prohibitions.

Rahitnama Hazuri, also called *Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh*, is the most elaborate statement of rules of conduct for the Sikhs. Its authorship is traditionally ascribed to Bhai Chaupa Singh Chhibbar, who had been in attendance upon Guru Gobind Singh since his (the Guru's) childhood. Kesar Singh Chhibbar describes briefly in his *Bansavalinama* how Guru Gobind Singh decided to have the rules of Khalsa conduct codified and recorded, and how the Guru responded, shortly before the siege of Anandpur and its evacuation, to the requests from his Sikhs by commanding Chaupa Singh to write a *rahitnama*. When Chaupa Singh humbly professed insufficient competence for so weighty a responsibility, he was reassured by the promise that the Guru himself would inspire and direct his words. Dutifully, he recorded a *rahitnama* a copy of which written in the hand of Sital Singh Bahrupia was taken to the Guru for his imprimatur. A second copy was then prepared by a Sud Sikh and this too was certified by the Guru. The work was, according to internal evidence, authenticated by Guru Gobind Singh on 7 Jeth 1757 Bk/5 May 1700. The Guru ordered, it further states, that more copies of it should be got similarly attested and no additions to it were to be made. The concluding portion of this *Rahitnama* containing dates 1759 Bk and 1763 Bk (AD 1702 and 1706) is apparently an addition by Chaupa Singh or by interpolators later. The extant text of the *Rahitnama*

seems to be a composite work drawn from at least three different sources. It begins as a formal *rahitnama* presenting a regular series of injunctions, but then switches over to a narrative sequence. It subsequently returns to its formal presentation of the *rahit* abandoning it again for another extended narrative sequence.

Of the 1800 injunctions contained in the *Rahitnama* the main ones are: A Sikh should regularly say his *nitnem*, and be always alert in attending to his duty and earn his living by the labour of his hands; he should have no dealing with *minas*, *masands*, *ramraias*, the shaven ones, and with those who practise female infanticide; he should not drink liquor; he should never be parted from the five, viz. *kachchh* (shorts), *kes* (hair), *kirpan* (sword), *bani* and *sangat*, he should not use nor deal in tobacco and should not give his daughter in marriage to one who smokes; he should regularly set aside *dasvandh* or tithe, and he should not trade in *pothis* or manuscript copies of *gurbani*. A special feature of *Rahitnama Hazuri* is a section devoted to Sikh women. Some of the stipulations: they should not bathe naked; should ensure personal hygiene and cleanliness while cooking or serving; should not abuse a male; should cover their heads while in *sangat*; should learn to read (Guru) Granth Sahib but must not read it in public; they should not be baptized; should shun unclean songs and jokes; should be religious, modest and chaste; and so on.

The *Rahitnama* contains a classic catalogue of Sikh characteristics and virtues. In a free English rendering: Sikh faith is his who honours his *kes* and preserves them to his very last breath; who recites the *sabda*; who finds his fulfilment in doing his duty; who reflects on the Guru's teaching; who is armed with the weapon of chastity; whose word is truth; who accepts the preordained law; who rejoices in feeding others; who believes in

the sovereignty of the sword; who worships the Timeless One; who adores the weapons; who has a reputation for charity; who exudes fragrance of his Sikh faith; who earns repute by his readiness to serve others; who commands the sweetness of speech; who is true to his salt; who is modest in his appearance; whose *grihastha* is with his gentle wife of good breeding; who lives always in the Lord's presence; who adores his family; who obeys the command of the Guru; who lives by the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib; who rejoices in the rites of the Khalsa; who remains awake singing the Lord's praise; who dutifully washes his *kes*; who abjures wrong-doing; who is alert in his conduct; who is disciplined in his speech; whose *rahit* is truly in his heart rather than merely external; who holds his belief discerningly; who owns the Guru; who loves his fellow Sikhs; who serves his father and mother; who recites *bani* from memory; who has his mind in control; who attains authority though in service; who has love in his heart; who shares with others what he has; who annihilates his sins; whose dealings are marked by propriety; whose addiction is *prasad*, i.e. *karah prasad* (the Sikh sacrament); who is ready for a square fight; who acknowledges the power of the Word; who contributes to the advancement of *dharma*; who is desirous always of contemplating on His Name.

However, the extant texts of the *Rahitnama* are adulterated and contain injunctions which are in conflict with approved Sikh teaching. It grants, for example, a position of privilege to the Brahman and orders a contemptuous ostracizing of the Muslims. The presence of strong Puranic element and the influence of the Devi cult are some of the other possible corruptions in the extant texts.

Rahitnama Bhai Desa Singh is admittedly a late-18th-century work. It is in the form of a long poem of 146 couplets and short four-line stanzas. The poet states that he

had lived in Bunga Maralivala at Amritsar where Sardar Jassa Singh (Ahluvalia) has also lived for a long time. From there, in old age, he visited Patna. During his travels after that, he once in a dream was ordered by Guru Gobind Singh to write down a code of conduct for the Sikhs. Bhai Desa Singh lays particular stress on the following points: a Sikh must receive the rites of the Khalsa by ceremony of the double-edged sword; should devote himself to *bani* and refrain from backbiting and slander; should use *vahiguruji ki fateh* as the form of salutation and greeting, should recite regularly ordered texts; should treat all women other than his wife as daughters or mothers; must maintain the five symbols of the Sikhs; must not flee the battlefield; should make pilgrimage to the Sikh holy places; should serve only the Khalsa or should engage in agriculture, trade or industry, but should not seek employment with the Turks nor indulge in theft or robbery; should be an intent listener at recitals of Guru Granth Sahib and at religious discourses; must not use tobacco and other intoxicants nor *kuttha* (flesh of animal slaughtered in the Muslim fashion); should eat *jhatka* (flesh of animal killed in the Sikh manner with a single blow), if at all; must learn reading and writing the Gurmukhi script; must beware of the five sins, viz. adultery, gambling, lying, stealing and liquor; should not criticize other religious faiths; should not live on offerings made at *gurdwaras*; even a Sikh minister should spend out of the offerings sparingly for his personal use and spend the major part for *deg* or Guru ka Langar and on maintenance of the *gurdwara*. According to Desa Singh, maintenance of unshorn hair (*kes*) is obligatory for a Sikh. A common form of living is important, but equally important is *rahit* or stipulated moral living. He says, "*rahit su kesan ko ati bhukhan/rahit bina sir kes bhi dukhan*" (*rahit* is ornament for the hair; without *rahit* the hair of the head too is a fake (verses 82-83). The poet then

proceeds to set down instructions regarding the preparation and serving of *langar* or community meal (90-123).

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T. S.

SAHAJ (**J. S. Neki**), in Sikh vocabulary, refers to a state of mental and spiritual equipoise without the least intrusion of ego; unshaken natural and effortless serenity attained through spiritual discipline. Ego (*aham* or *haumai*) develops out of the undifferentiated primordial being as a result of the socio-cultural conditioning factors that generate as a result of a process of individuation. Ego is thus a mere psychic substantive, a myth that not only begins to shroud the primordial nature of the human soul, but also is responsible for all kinds of emotional and volitional disturbances. When this ego is quelled, and one resides once again in the innate, undisturbed, effortless state of the soul, *sahaj* is said to have been attained. Although called a state (*avastha*), in fact it transcends all states, for it is a return to the soul as it was before any 'states' differentiated or derived from it.

The word *sahaj* is derived from Sanskrit twin roots: *saha*, together, and *ja*, born. Thus, it means born together (with oneself), hence innate. It signifies innate nature, or one's natural spontaneous self shorn of all external conditioning influences that cramp the soul. *Sahaj* is, thus, renascent freedom or liberation of the soul.

The term has a long history. The basic concept came from the leftist Tantric cults in whose vocabulary *sahaj* signified a protest against the formalism of orthodox religion. They decried the bondage of artificial conventions and affirmed the non-transgression of the natural. Sahaj was, thus, the basic tenet of the Indian antinomianism. The Sahajyana Buddhists, Natha Yogis, and Sahajiya Saivites, all in their own time and in their specific way, emphasized the cultivation of *sahaj*, but they were all in a sense Tantric in outlook, for the raison d'etre of these schools with the solitary exception of the Nathapanthis was to be found in particular sexoyogic practices as a part of religious *sadhna*. However, the

followers of these sects, in fact, seem to have stretched their antinomian protest to its utmost limit and held that the most meritorious acts are such natural ones as eating and drinking which sustain life, sexual intercourse which propagates it, and the natural functions which give it ease. In actual practice, it really amounted to a total surrender to carnal appetites. As a result of this, these cults went into disrepute and the original concept of' *sahaj* became besmirched with questionable ethical connotations. Its reintroduction into the Indian mystic lore by the preceptors of the Sikh faith signified a new turn in the history of this term, for they invested it with a new breadth of meaning and mystical import coupled with sublime ethical and aesthetic connotations that conduced to the elevation of the soul.

The Sikh concept of *sahaj* shared with that of the sects mentioned (a) rejection of external formalities, (b) rejection of priestly authority, and in a positive way, (c) recognition of the *guru* as essential for spiritual growth and advancement, and (d) recognition of the Ultimate Reality as an experience of unruffled equipoise and ineffable bliss. However, it differed from them not only in its rejection at once of sexoyogic practices (of Sahajayanis) as well as in the derogation of women (of Nathapanthis), but even in the breadth of conceptualization. For the Gurus, man's original nature was of the nature of light or intuitive knowledge "*man tun joti sarupu hai apana mulu pachhanu*" (GG, 441). A reattainment of this natural self, with its attendant peace and equipoise is *sahaj*. In this state, life is unaffected by any artificiality or put-up appearances for they are but the defences of the empirical ego (*haumai*) and that, in *sahaj*, is conquered. Then with a basic dispositional spontaneity, love goodness and compassion blossom forth from the being. This widened concept of *sahaj* signifies a transcendent state—one beyond the

ordinary modes of being (*gunas*), beyond the habitual levels of consciousness and beyond the illusion of duality or *maya*.

To appreciate fully the breadth of meaning of the Sikh concept of *sahaj*, it may be looked at from various aspects. In its cognitive aspect, it can be seen as a state of illumination, one of heightened consciousness, mystical awareness (*sahaj rahas*) or intuitive knowledge. In this state the duality of subject and object (which results from a process of individuation and ego-formation) vanishes: Since all feelings of duality basically develop around the subject-object dichotomy, with the dissolution of the latter, these disappear, distances vanish and reality comes to be perceived with the impact of immediacy. In its cognitive aspect, *sahaj* is a state of freedom wherein everything happens with natural ease (*sahaj subhai*). Spontaneity is the ground of every kind of behaviour—vegetative, emotive and moral. On the emotive or aesthetic planes, it signifies the discovery of the great harmony within as well as without. In *sahaj*, as it were, an inner door (*dasam dvar*) of aesthetic perception opens up and one directly perceives the rhythmicity of one's being weave an 'unstruck melody' (*anhat nad*) which is accompanied by a pervading feeling of unconditioned bliss (*sahaj anand*).

A deeper significance of existence seems to emerge in *sahaj*. When one becomes oriented to it, emotional turbulence ceases. Pleasures and pains pass like ripples over the surface while the mighty deep underneath remains unruffled. Then, it appears, one dons pleasures and pains just as one changes one's garments "*sukhu dukhu dui dari kapare pahirahi jai manukh*"(GG, 149). This is how *sahaj* epitomizes mental equipoise in which all turbulence of emotions is calmed. While the egocentrics abide in doubt and carry anxieties in their heart which permit them to sleep, the wise wake and sleep in sahaj—

"*manmukhi bharamai sahasa hovai antari chinta nid na sovai giani jagahi savahi subhai nanak nami ratia bali jau*" (GG, 646). Peace being the hallmark of this state, all running about and all feverish pursuits cease. Wandering itself is worn out for now a new dignity in life is found.

Sahaj has been called a state of freedom. It betokens freedom from desire (*trsna*), from conflict (*dvandva*) and from illusion (*maya*). One is liberated from the cramping influence of social compulsions, yet one does not become a fugitive from social responsibility. On the contrary, since one is also cured simultaneously of the equally cramping compulsion of egoism, one no longer lives for oneself. One lives more for others. In *sahaj* one is also liberated from the servility of carnal needs. In this state neither drowsiness, nor hunger remains; and one ever abides in the Divine Bliss of Hari Nam (God's Name). Pleasure and sorrow occur not where the all-pervading self shineth forth—"*gurmukhi antari sahaju hai manu charia dasavai akasi tithai ungh na bhukh hai hari amrit namu sukh vasu nanak dukhu sukhu viapat nahijithai atam ram pragasu*" (GG, 1414).

Sahaj also spells an awareness of the great vital harmony (*sahajdhuni*) within as one gets attuned to the inner rhythm of Being. One also simultaneously discovers self-same harmony and mystical rhythmicity pervading the entire gamut of the mighty cosmos. The intensity of this experience is a great aesthetic wonderment. It is a creative joy of the highest order—sheer 'joy' in contradistinction to 'enjoyment' of the sense objects. It is; therefore, not ephemeral like the latter, but is an abiding state of undiminishing bliss. Although illumination, spontaneity, freedom, equipoise, and harmony may be described as the chief characteristics of *sahaj*, there are several other

subtle characteristics of this state alluded to at several places in the Guru Granth Sahib as, for example, in the following passage:

> One who abideth in *sahaj*
>
> Looketh alike on friend and foe.
>
> What he heareth is essence true;
>
> And in his seeing is meditation.
>
> He sleepeth in calm, he riseth in peace
>
> From 'being' to 'becoming' with natural ease.
>
> Sad or glad, he abideth in *sahaj*;
>
> Effortless his silence; spontaneous his utterance.
>
> In poise he eateth, in poise he loveth.
>
> In *sahaj* he findeth distances bridged.
>
> (GG, 236)

It is thus the supremest spiritual state. How can, then, this state be attained? Actions, however meritorious, do not bring it about. In fact, *sahaj* does not sprout so long as one abideth in *maya*—"*maia vichi sahaju na upajai maia dujai bhai*" (GG, 68). To become detached from the world of *maia* (*maya*), one does not need actions, but *gian* (*jnana*), which comes from the grace of the Guru. Says Guru Amar Das: "O brother! there can be no *sahaj* without the Guru's benevolence. *Sahaj* sprouts from the Word, whereby one meets the Lord—the true One—"*bhai re gur binu sahaju na hoi*. . . ." (GG, 68). From the true Word emanates the *sahajdhuni* (the tune of *sahaj*) and the mind gets absorbed in Truth—"*sachai sabadi sahaj dhuni upajai mani sachai liv lai*" (GG, l 234).

And then the very music of *sahaj* that is being played at His door, also becomes the brandmark of the seeker—"*tere duarai dhuni sahaj ki mathai mere dagai*" (GG, 970).

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J. S. N.

SAHAJDHARI (**Kirpal Singh, B. Harbans Lal**), a gradualist among Sikhs. Like other Sikhs, the Sahajdharis believe in the Ten Gurus and in the Guru Granth Sahib, though they exempt themselves from the obligation of keeping their hair unshorn. Receiving the rites of Khalsa baptism one day and maintaining long uncut hair and beard remain, nevertheless, the ultimate ideal which they must realize in their lifetime or see it realized by their offspring. Some Sahajdhari parents place themselves under a vow to rear their first-born son as a full Sikh. The Sahajdharis, as a rule, are not given the Sikh surname of 'Singh'. The term *sahajdharis* is a compound of two words —*sahaj* and *dhari*. The word *sahaj* (in Sanskrit, *sahaja*) implies poise, unhurriedness and the word *dhari* stands for adopting or accepting a creed or form. This term came into use after Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa in 1699 A D., introducing the *khande di pahul*, i.e. baptism by the double-edged sword. Those who took *khande di pahul* received the title of the 'Khalsa', and those who for one reason or another could not came to be known as Sahajdharis, i.e. Sikhs who would have themselves baptized as Khalsa at some later stage. It was, in the first instance, not possible to have baptism administered all at once by the rites established by Guru Gobind Singh to Sikhs in far-flung *sangats*. Another impediment was the conflict which broke out between the Sikhs and the ruling authority soon after. However, Sahajdharis have been part of the larger Sikh body since the time of Guru Gobind Singh. Two of them in his own day—Bhai Nand Lal and Bhai Kanhaiya — enjoyed great esteem. Bhai Nand Lal, a great Persian scholar and poet, maintained at Anandpur a *langar* or refectory open to visitors all the twenty-four hours. Bhai Kanhaiya won the Guru's admiration and is remembered in the Sikh tradition to this day for the devotion with which he served the wounded in battle, making no distinction between

friend and foe. In the early part of the eighteenth century when Sikhs suffered fierce persecution and when to be a Kesadhari, that is to bear *kesa* or long hair, was to invite sure death, the Sahajdharis looked after their places of worship and protected the households and the kith and kin of those driven to seek safety in hill and jungle. Some even defied the persecutors and courted martyrdom as did the teenaged Haqiqat Rai, who was beheaded in public for his refusal to disown his Sikh belief and accept Islam. A leading Sahajdhari Sikh of that time was Kaura Mall, a minister to the Mughal governor of Lahore, Mu'in ul-Mulk (1748-53), who helped the Sikhs in diverse ways in those days of severe trial. He had so endeared himself to them that they called him Mittha ('sweet', in Punjabi) Mall instead of Kaura (which, in Punjabi, means 'bitter') Mall. Sikh tradition also recalls another Sahajdhari, Des Raj, of this period who was entrusted by the Khalsa with the task of having reconstructed the Harimandar, demolished by the Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Durrani, in 1762. Dina Nath was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's finance minister. Bhai Vasti Ram, a learned man well versed in Sikh scripture, enjoyed considerable influence at the court.

Sahajdharis have continued to participate in Sikh life right up to modern times and have associated themselves with Sikh institutions and organizations such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Shiromani Akali Dal, and the All-India Sikh Students Federation. The Singh Sabhas used to have seats on their executive committees reserved for the Sahajdharis. Among their own societies, confined prior to the migrations of 1947, mainly to north-western India, were the Sahajdhari Committee of Multan, Guru Nanak Sahajdhari Diwan of Panja Sahib and Sri Guru Nanak Sahajdhari Jatha of Campbellpore. The Sahajdhari Diwan of Panja Sahib attained the

status of their central forum. They as well had their annual conference which met for its first session on 13 April 1929 under the chairmanship of Sir Jogendra Singh who passed on the office to the famous Sikh scholar and savant, Bhai Kahn Singh. A Sahajdharis' meeting formed part of the annual proceedings of the Sikh Educational Conference.

The Sahajdharis share with the main body of the Sikhs all of their religious and social customs and ceremonies and join their congregations in the *gurdwaras*. The population in the Punjab of Sahajdhari Sikhs (another name used is Sikh Nanakpanthis) according to 1891 Census was 397,000 (20% of the total Sikh population); according to 1901 Census, 297,000 (13% of the total Sikhs); according to 1911 Census, 451,000 (14.9% of the total Sikhs); according to 1921 Census, 229,000 (7% of the total Sikhs); according to 1931 Census, 282,000 (6.5% of the total Sikhs). Outside of the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Sindh had considerable Sahajdhari populations. Consequent upon the partition of India in 1947, Sahajdharis became widely dispersed in the country. Their India-wide forum was the Sarab Hind (All-India) Sahajdharis Conference which rotated from town to town for its annual sessions. Three of its presidents—Mahant Karam Chand, Bhai Sant Ram and Bhai Ram Lal Rahi—eventually took the vows of Khalsa baptism, receiving respectively the names Gur Darshan Singh, Sant Ram Singh and Ram Lal Singh Rahi.

Kr. S., H. L.

SANGAT (**K. Jagjit Singh**), Punjabi form of the Sanskrit term *sangti*, means company, fellowship, association. In Sikh vocabulary, the word has a special connotation. It stands for the body of men and women met religiously, especially in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. Two other expressions carrying the same connotation and in equally common use are *sadh sangat* (fellowship of the seekers of truth). The word *sangat* has been in use since the time of Guru Nanak (1469-1539). In his days and those of his nine successors, *sangat* referred to the Sikh brotherhood established in or belonging to a particular locality. The term is used in this sense in the Janam Sakhis, i.e. traditional life-stories of Guru Nanak, and in the *hukamnamas*, i.e. edicts issued by the Gurus to their followers in different parts of the country. In the *hukamnamas* there are references, for instance, to Sarbatt Sangat Banaras Ki, i.e. the entire Sikh community of Banaras (Varanasi), Patna ki Sangat, i.e. the Sikhs of Patna, Dhaul ki Sangat, the Sikhs of Dhaul. In common current usage, the word signifies an assembly of the devotees. Such a gathering may be in a *gurdwara*, in a private residence or in any other place, but in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. The purpose is religious prayer, instruction or ceremony. The *sangat* may collectively chant the sacred hymns, or, as it more often happens, there may be a group of musicians to perform *kirtan*. At *sangat* there may be recitals of the holy writ with or without exposition, lectures on religious or theological topics, or narration of events from Sikh history. Social and political matters of interest for the community may as well be discussed.

In Sikh faith highest merit is assigned to meeting of the followers in *sangat*. This is considered essential for the spiritual edification and progress of an individual. It is a means of religious and ethical training. Worship and prayer in *sangat* count for more than

isolated religious practice. The holy fellowship is morally elevating. Here the seeker learns to make himself useful to others by engaging in acts of *seva*, or self-giving service, so highly prized in Sikhism. The *seva* can take the form of looking after the assembly's shoes for all must enter the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib barefoot; preparing and serving food in Guru ka Langar; and relieving the rigour of a hot summer day by swinging over the heads of the devotees large hand-fans. It is in the company of pious men that true religious discipline ripens. Those intent on spiritual advantage must seek it.

Though *sangat* has freedom to discuss secular matters affecting the community, it is its spiritual core which imparts to it the status and authority it commands in the Sikh system. As Guru Nanak says, "*satsangat* is where the Divine Name alone is cherished" (GG, 72). This is where virtues are learnt. "*Satsangat* is the Guru's own school where one practises godlike qualities" (GG, 1316). Attendance at *sangat* wins one nearness to God and release from the circuit of birth and death. "Sitting among *sangat* one should recite God's praise and thereby swim across the impassable ocean of existence" (GG, 95). As *satsangat* is obtained through the Guru's grace, the Name blossoms forth in the heart (GG, 67-68). "Amid *sangat* abides the Lord God" (GG, 94). "God resides in the *sangat*. He who comprehends the Guru's word realizes this truth (GG, 1314). "Deprived of *sangat*, one's self remains begrimed" (GG, 96). "Without *sangat* ego will not be dispelled" (GG, 1098). Says Guru Arjan in *Sukhmani*, "Highest among all works is joining the *sangat* and thereby conquering the evil propensities of the mind" (GG, 266). Again, "As one lost in a thick jungle rediscovers one's path, so will one be enlightened in the company of the holy" (GG, 282).

Sangat, fellowship of the holy, is thus applauded as a means of moral and spiritual uplift; it is as well a social unit which inculcates values of brotherhood, equality and *seva*. *Sangats* sprang up in the wake of Guru Nanak's extensive travels. Group of disciples formed in different places and met together in *sangat* to recite his hymns.

As an institution, *sangat* had, with its concomitants *dharamsal*, where the devotees gathered in the name of Akal, the Timeless Lord, to pray and sing Guru Nanak's hymns, and Guru ka Langar, community refectory, where all sat together to partake of a common repast without distinction of caste or status—symbolized the new way of life emerging from Guru Nanak's teachings. At the end of his *udasis* or travels, Guru Nanak settled at Kartarpur, a habitation he had himself founded on the right bank of the River Ravi. There a community of disciples grew around him. It was not a monastic order, but a fellowship of ordinary men engaged in ordinary occupation of life. A key element in this process of restructuring of religious and social life was the spirit of *seva*. Corporal works of charity and mutual help were undertaken voluntarily and zealously and considered a peculiarly pious duty. To quote Bhai Gurdas: "*dharamsal kartarpur sadhsangati sach khandu vasaia*", Varan, XXIV. 11, i.e. in establishing *dharamsal* at Kartapur, with its *sangat* or society of the holy, Guru Nanak brought the heaven on earth.

These *sangats* played an important role in the evolution of the Sikh community. The social implications of the institutions were far-reaching. It united the Sikhs in a particular locality or region into a brotherhood or fraternity. A member of the *sangat*, i.e. every Sikh was known as *bhai*, lit. brother, signifying one of holy living. The *sangat* brought together men not only in spiritual pursuit but also in worldly affairs, forging community of purpose as well as of action based on mutual equality and brotherhood.

Though *sangats* were spread over widely separated localities, they formed a single entity owning loyalty to the word of Guru Nanak. *Sangats* were thus the Sikh community in formation.

In these *sangats* the disciples mixed together without considerations of birth, profession or worldly position. Bhai Gurdas, his *Var* XI, mentions the names of the leading Sikhs of the time of Guru Nanak and his five spiritual successors. In the first 12 stanzas are described the characteristics of a *gursikh*, or follower of the Guru. In the succeeding stanzas occur the names of some of the prominent Sikhs, in many cases with caste, class or profession of the individual. In some instances, even places they came from are mentioned. In these stanzas, Bhai Gurdas thus provides interesting clues to the composition, socially, of early Sikhism and its spread, geographically. Out of the 19 disciples of Guru Nanak mentioned by Bhai Gurdas, two were Muslims—Mardana, a *mirasi*, or bard, from his own village, and Daulat Khan Lodi, an Afghan noble. Bura, celebrated as Bhai Buddha, who was contemporary with the first six Gurus, was a Jatt of Randhava subcaste. So was Ajitta, of Pakkhoke Randhava, in present-day Gurdaspur district. Phirna was a Khaihra Jatt; Malo and Manga were musicians; and Bhagirath, formerly a worshipper of the goddess Kali, was the *chaudhari*, i.e. revenue official of Malsihan, in Lahore district Of the several Khatri disciples, Mula was of Kir subcaste, Pritha and Kheda were Soinis, Prithi Mall was a Sahigal, Bhagta was Ohri, Japu a Vansi, and Sihan and Gajjan cousins were Uppals. The Sikh *sangat* was thus the melting-pot for the high and the low, the twice-born and the outcaste. It was a new fraternity emerging as the participants' response of discipleship to the Guru.

Sangats were knit into an organized system by Guru Amar Das who established *manjis* or preaching districts, each comprising a number of *sangats*. Guru Arjan appointed *masands*, community leaders, to look after *sangats* in different regions. *Sangat* was the precursor to the Khalsa manifested by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. That was the highest point in the evolution of the casteless Sikh commonwealth originating in the institution of *sangat*.

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K. J. S.

SANGRAND (**Taran Singh**), *sankranti* in Sanskrit, is the first day of each month of the Indian solar calendar, based on the shifting of the sun from one house (*rasi*) to another. From quite early in human history, the sun, and its satellites, the planets, came to be regarded as objects endowed with celestial mind, a definite personality and the capability of influencing the destinies of human beings. They became the deities whose favourable intervention was sought by men in their affairs. The worship of Surya, the Sun god, was a feature of Vedic times, and it has continued one way or another in the Indian tradition. A popular form has been the observance of Sankranti with ritual performances such as fasts, bathing at holy places and distribution of charity. In the Sikh system, the only object of adoration is the supreme Being. No other deity is acknowledged. In the Sikh metaphor, the Guru is the Sun which illumines the mind of the disciple. Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan composed Baramahas or calendar poems with stanzas devoted to each of the twelve solar months. Guru Nanak in his poem describes the natural landscape from month to month along with the yearning of the bride (devotee) for God, the Beloved. In Guru Arjan's stanzas is rendered the mood of the devotees in each month. To quote Guru Nanak: The month of Chet (Chaitra) is marked by Basant (Spring) and blossoming, but the human mind, even in such a season, will not effloresce without union with God achieved through meditation on the Name under the Guru's instruction. Guru Arjan in the stanza on Chet observes that meditation on the Name in this month would bring boundless bliss; the Name is received through the grace of the saints; living without the Name renders life futile and brings suffering. The Lord pervades all existence. Both of them in the end say that each moment, day or month spent in meditation on the Name brings bliss. Besides the Name, no other propitiation or worship will help.

But, in course of time, the practice of celebrating the Sangrand (Sankranti) entered the Sikh way of life, if only to provide an occasion for the recitation of one of the Baramahas. Special *divans* take place at *gurdwaras* when Guru Arjan's *Baramaha* is read in addition to the performance of usual services. Devotees turn up in large numbers and bring offerings, especially of *karah prasad*. Individuals who cannot join the recitation in *gurdwaras*, may say the *Baramaha* privately. In homes where the Holy Book is ceremonially installed special services will be set up to mark the day and families will gather to listen to the *Baramaha* being recited from Scripture.

T. S

SANT (**W. H. McLeod**), commonly translated as saint though not very exactly, for the English term, used in the adjectival sense 'saintly' for a person of great holiness, virtue or benevolence, has a formal connotation in the Western culture, is a modified form of *sat* meaning lasting, real, wise and venerable. *Sat* or *Satya* has been used since the Vedic times for the Ever-existent, Unchanging Reality or the Self-existent, Universal Spirit, Brahman or God. The term *sant* came into vogue much later. The word occurs frequently in the ancient Pali literature of Buddhism in the sense of tranquil, true or wise. From Pali it was resuscitated during the middle ages when Bhakti movement took its birth. The epithet *sant* was usually added to the names of the Vaisnava *bhaktas* of Maharashtra belonging to Vitthal or Varkari school such as Jnandev, Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram. According to R.D. Ranade, *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, "Now 'Santa' is almost a technical word in the Vitthal Sampradaya, and means any man who is a follower of that Sampradaya. Not that followers of other Sampradayas are not 'Santas' but the followers of the Varkari Sampradaya are *santas* par excellence." Within the *Bhakti* movement there is a distinct Sant tradition clearly distinguishable from South Indian Saiva *bhakti* and the Vaisnava tradition of Northern and Central India. The Sant-bhaktas were essentially non-sectarian. They were strict monotheists and were opposed to Brahmanical ritualism, idol-worship and caste system. Like other *bhaktas*, they valued love-relationship between the individual and the deity, but their deity, although usually given Vaisnava names, is the Absolute Reality, Unborn, Formless, All-pervading, Self-existent, *nirguna* (without attributes) God, who makes Himself manifest the Name (*nam*) which may be uttered or meditated upon. Nirguni *bhaktas* refute *avatarvada* or

incarnation, but they believe that the *sant*, through living a life of piety and practising *nam*, can attain final release.

Through Bhakti the term passed into the Sikh tradition. In the Guru Granth Sahib there is frequent mention of the status and significance of the *sant*, a holy man who represents the salt of the earth and the hope of mankind. Guru Arjan defines a *sant* thus: "*jina sasi girasi na visrai harinaman mani mantu/ dhannu si sei nanaka puranu soi santu*—They who do not put away from their minds the Name Divine even for the duration of a breath or as they swallow a morsel are indeed blessed, o Nanak! They are the perfect *sants*" (GG, 319). Guru Arjan in another hymn:

All the twenty-four hours of day and night,

He knows God to be close to his heart,

And to His will he cheerfully submits.

Name alone is the sustenance of the *sant*

A *sant* considers himself to be the dust of the feet of all.

This, brothers, is the *sants'* way of life,

Beyond my power is it to describe its excellence.

Name alone is their occupation,

In blissful *kirtan* do they find their peace.

Friend and foe are to them alike.

Besides their God they acknowledge not another.

Myriad sins can a *Sant* erase,

He is the dispeller of sorrow and the bestower of life.

Heroes true to their word are the *sants*,

Even poor *maya* is by them beguiled.

The gods themselves long for their company;

To have a sight of them is fulfilling in the extreme,

To be able to serve them a blessing.

Nanak does with folded hands supplicate:

Grant me this favour, O Treasure of Merit,

that to the service of the *sants* do I

dedicate myself. (GG, 392)

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W. H. M.

SANT TRADITION (**David C. Scott**) comprises those medieval monotheistic and devout personalities belonging to different shades of Indian society who are supposed to have been quiet, tranquil non-sectarian, opposed to Brahmanical ritualism, piously tired of the duplicity of the world but otherwise deeply conscious and critical of the outrageous anomalies professed by certain vested interests among the people around. In general terms these mystical personalities are known as *nirgun bhaktas* or more commonly *sants*.

The Sanskrit form of the term *sant* is rooted in *sam* meaning 'appeased' or 'pacified'. Sometimes this tradition is directly linked with Vedic and Upanisadic thought but very often it is accepted as influenced by Sahajyana, an offshoot of Buddhism. Commonly the practices of Sant tradition are remembered as Hathayogic, however, with the exception of Sikhism which, sufficiently influenced by this tradition, has repudiated all sorts of mortifications of body through Hathayoga. Very early the term *sant* had acquired two specific connotations. On the one hand, it served to designate a school or rather a particular group of Vaisnava *bhaktas* devoted to the incarnations of Visnu and hence called *sagunvadins* but on the other we find Guru Nanak, Ravidas, Kabir, Dadu, Paltu, etc., who without getting led astray by excessive emotionalism never miss to delineate their last aim of liberal attitude, universal thinking and hence a pure ethical code of conduct. The vast literature of this tradition radiates a specific dynamic energy containing in it a challenge of frankness and fearlessness.

It is significant to note that often the term *sant* is distinguished from *bhakta* by calling them *nirgunvadins* and *sagunvadins*, respectively. In Marathi literature the worshippers of qualified God and the meditators of the unattributed Supreme Being, both are called *bhaktas* and the latter ones *sants*. However, there is a sharp difference in their

dispositions. We find *bhakta* literature replete with the warm emotions for the incarnations of God but in *nirguna* literature the *sants* contradict this theory. They don't involve themselves in the riddles of hell and heaven and their worship is realizational and not based on *sastras*. The *sants* seem little bothered about the hollow premises and rhetoric. They spread from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries of the Christian era throughout the whole of north India and part of the Deccan. Within the tradition on itself the term *sant* seems to have been used as a synonym for *sadh* or *sadhu* in the sense of one who has "perfected" or "accomplished" the ultimate unitary experience. The *sant* tradition of medieval India, though predominantly theistic and devotional unlike the Sramana tradition, is however supposed to have carried forward the moral and social ideas and ideals of non-Brahmanical origin first diffused by the ancient *moons* and *shamans*. In this medieval period the emphasis on a personal God stems from a tendency, in Indian religions, which became prominent in the Upanisads, to find divinity present, immanent in nature and by extension, in the very being of man. We must also note that the personalization of the deity in Vaisnavite religion and in certain sects which worshipped local anthropomorphic forms of the deity was countered by the general pantheistic tendency of the Upanisads with their emphasis on the identity of all with the Divine. Caught between the various sectarian developments and driven towards a personalization of deity on the one hand and accepting the monistic tendency of much of earlier Indian philosophy on the other, the people of India, drew on the earlier tradition of *munis* and *sramanas* to establish numerous sects of practitioners of the discipline of *yoga* and of wandering *sants* and *yogis* with differing degrees of spiritual realization and theories about the manner of achieving it. The influence of Mahayana Buddhism,

especially of its esoteric variety lingered in India long after the final disappearance of the Buddhist Sangha in its homeland. Further, the institution of the Buddhist monks and several philosophical moral doctrines of Buddhism became incorporated into Hinduism in its reflowering from the eighth century of the Christian era onwards.

In this milieu the Sant tradition was essentially a synthesis of four principal dissenting movements, a compound of elements drawn from the Mahayanism of the *siddhas*, the *vaisnava bhakhi*, the Hathayoga of the Nath-yogins and with a marginal contribution from Sufism. The non-vedic strand in the Sant tradition was an important legacy of Buddhism and the numerous terms and concepts of Buddhism of the siddhas found a lasting home in the writings of the *sants*. In several respects, however, the *sants* disagreed with traditional Vaisnava-bhakti also and some of these differences were fundamental, such as their (*sants'*) rejection of *avatarvada*, accepted by all Vaisnava *bhaktas*. Their devotion directed to an invisible all-pervading Reality to be realized 'within' was a novel experience for the people of medieval northern India, for they had been habitually worshipping some sort of 'qualified' visible anthropomorphic gods or goddesses. The *bhakti* of *sants* is generally termed as *Vaisnava bhakti* but in this *bhakti* a monistic and strictly non-idolatrous attitude was injected by their chief exponents like Kabir, Ravidas, Rajjab, etc. The *sants* eschewed all forms of idolatry, most clearly seen in those times in the worship of Rama and Krsna. True, the *sants* were prone to use term *nirguna* in speaking about God but the term seems related more to a rejection of its antithesis, the *saguna* concept of divine *avatars* than an appropriation of the metaphysics of *Advaita Vedanta* of *Sankara*. Further, their expression of love for God was through

inward meditation and devotion, a method which involved certain disciplines controlling the senses and emotions and not the easy path of traditional *bhakti*.

Traces of the *Nath* school are also by no means absent during the earlier stages of this movement but they are not prominent, and in some cases they may even represent later additions. It was not until the time of Kabir that *nath* concepts assume a significant role and the influence of *siddhas* and *naths* emerges in much of Kabir's thought and basic terminology in the form of rejection of all exterior formalities, ceremonies, caste distinctions, sacred languages and scriptures. It further lays strong emphasis on the interior unitive experience which destroys duality, caste distinctions and prejudice for sacred languages and scriptures. The stress is put on the importance of the *satguru*, the power of *sabda* and the related notion of "*sumiran*," which leads the soul to the mystical experience of *paracha* through which the *jiva* is reabsorbed into the unity of Ram, the mysterious state of *sahaj*. A further indication of *siddha-nath* influence is Kabir's use of *ultabansis*, the use of language with often reversal of usual meaning of words. This kind of enigmatical speech with intentional meanings hidden under the cover of obvious meanings was employed extensively by the *siddhas* like Sarahapad and Krsnapad. However, as characteristically indicative as any in this regard is Kabir's essentially pragmatic approach to the mystery of human destiny. Like the *siddhas* and the *yogis* before him, Kabir seeks to penetrate the mystery rather than to triumph over death.

The *sants* were basically monotheists, but the ultimate Reality (*paramatattva*) whom they addressed and with whom they sought union was in no sense to be understood in anthropomorphic terms. His manifestation was through His immanence in His creation and, in particular, through His indwelling in the human soul. It was there that He, by

grace (*prasad*), revealed Himself, and man's appropriate response was love and devotion (*namsumiran*) as a means of merging with the Divine. Great importance was attached to the *guru* who might be a human teacher or who might be understood not as a person but as the inner voice of God. The *sants* attached little importance to celibacy and asceticism and hence together with the *sufis* they were commonly laymen or householders rather than monks or ascetics in the formal sense. The spirit of the movement was essentially non-sectarian though many of the *sants* left their names to the sects which sprang up in their wake, of which certain ones still survive today.

Their beliefs the *sants* expressed not in the classical Sanskrit language, but in a language which was closely related to that of the common people to whom they addressed their teachings. There seems to have evolved a "dialect" which, with minor modifications, was used by the *sants* all over northern India. The basis of this dialect, which has been called Sadhukari was Khari Boli, mixed with old Rajasthani, Braj, Panjabi and Purvi Boli spoken in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh. Most of the *sants* were generally poorly educated or completely illiterate, and hence their compositions were usually oral utterances which came to be written down only after a period of oral circulation.

The Sant movement was composed of two principal groups during its period of greatest importance and influence, from the fourteenth to eighteen centuries of the Christian era, the one centred in north India and the other centred in Maharashtra, the latter being the older.

It was this *sant* tradition which provided the basis for Guru Nanak's thought, an inheritance which he interpreted in the light of his own personality and experience.

Before the advent of Sikhism, when the onslaughts of the hordes of invaders were rampantly crushing the people, the Indian mind and body unable to withstand it, started preaching, on the contrary, the doctrine of illusory nature of the world. People were advised to accept the non-existence of the very world in which they were being cramped. Sikhism asserted itself as the most self-respecting and fearless religious way of life to accept the challenge and to look into the real cause of the malady of helplessness of men. Sikhs could not remain passive onlookers and thus a very constructive culmination of Sant tradition is obvious in the advent of Sikhism. The thought of Guru Nanak was a reworking of the Sant synthesis, which he received and passed on, which was in some measure amplified, and in considerable measure clarified and integrated.

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D. C. S.

SARBATT DA BHALA (**Kulraj Singh**), literally, Weal to all. . . Weal to everyone. This is the concluding line which marks the finale or *ardas* or supplicatory prayer, with which every Sikh service or ceremony concludes. The full couplet reads: *Nanak nam chahrdi kala tere bhane sarbatt da bhala* (May God's Name, may the human spirit forever triumph, Nanak: And in Thy will may peace and prosperity come to one and all). *Sarbatt* (lit. all) here does not stand for members of a particular sect, community or nation, but for the whole humankind. *Sarbatt da bhala* is not a mere pious profession of goodwill for all beings; it is a living concept in the Sikh tradition central to the Gurus' spiritual vision. A line in the Scripture reads, "*eku pita ekas ke ham barik*—the One Lord God is the father of all of us; of the One Lord are we the children" (GG, 611). Belief in One Absolute and Infinite Creator God is a fundamental postulate of the Sikh faith. God is the creator, the ultimate ground of all that exists. From God emanated man. Man, in Sikhism, is the creation of God, and he partakes of His Own Light. The "stainless soul" within the material body is a spark of the light He is. There can be no distinctions and divisions made among men for reasons of birth, race, colour, country or creed. "All men are God's own creation," declared Guru Nanak. "False is caste and false are worldly titles. One Supreme Lord sustains all" (GG, 83), "*Manas ki jati sabhai ekai pahachanbo* —recognize all of the human race as one," said Guru Gobind Singh. This concept of a single humanity is basic to the Sikh world view. Out of this feeling of common fellowship arises the Sikh's wish to be of use to others. For him religious faith will not be fully realized unless he filled his everyday life with deeds calculated to secure the welfare of the people as a whole.

Sikhism enjoins active participation in life. This participation must be morally based. The religious man, according to Sikhism, has to be an engage. In the Sikh way of life, the end of spiritual endeavour is not a state of consciousness passively experienced; it is the attainment to a cognitive, affective, conative condition of being which is characterized as much by active goodwill for all beings as by the discovery of the true essence of things and the attendant joy and equipoise. Truth, as says Guru Nanak in his *Japu*, is attained by subjecting oneself to a multidimensional discipline which comprises not only the willing direction of one's mind to the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, intellectual discernment through knowledge, the cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility and harmony with Divine will, but also persistent effort to promote the general good. Habitual pursuit of the common good marks the peak of spiritual ascent; it is through consistent striving for the welfare of others that the process of devotion is brought to perfection. "Without doing good to others, devotion remains imperfect—*vinu gun kite bhagati na hoi*" (GG, 4).

The end of learning is that it should impel one to serve others—*vidia vichari ta parupkari* (GG, 356). Man has, according to Sikhism, come from the Divine and his travails will end when he merges back into the Divine. What stands n the way of man's union with the Divine is his *haumai*, his finite ego, his divisive concern with the self with its penumbra of base feelings and impulses. This merger into the Divine—liberation, i.e. the goal of Sikh spiritual quest—is attained through the obliteration of *haumai*. Freedom from the bondage of *haumai* is achieved negatively by restraining concern with the self and positively, and more fruitfully, by expanding one's affection to embrace the entire, creation. Involvement in the welfare of others is an essential element of the Sikh spiritual

and moral ideal. It is a conscious and consistent pursuit—a deliberately chosen principle of action rather than a momentary response to the phenomenon of misery, want or suffering. It is not just an act of benevolence, but a natural disposition. A Sikh always prays for the welfare of all. This precept of *sarbatt da bhala*, predicated on the belief in the brotherhood of man and in all men being equal heirs to God's grace, permeates the entire Sikh tradition. It was exemplified in deeds of *seva*, humble, self-abnegating service in the common cause and in the Guru ka Langar, the community refectory where all sat together to share the meal, overruling distinctions of caste, creed or clime.

The value epitomized by *sarbatt da bhala* has been a potent factor in the tradition and sensibility of the Sikhs. Even when they became a militant force to fight oppression, they had not forsworn the principle. Guru Gobind Singh, who fought several actions against the Hindu hill chiefs and the Mughals, especially applauded Bhai Kanhaiya, one of his Sikhs who served water to the wounded on the battlefield regardless of whether they were Sikhs or Muslims. Qazi Nur Muhammad, a chronicler who accompanied Ahmad Shah Durrani on his seventh invasion of India in 1764 and celebrated his exploits in the *masnavi* entitled *Jang Namah*, uses imprecatory language about the Sikhs and yet pays them a handsome tribute saying that they never chased the fleeing enemy, did not harm a soldier who had surrendered and did not loot a woman's valuables. Another Muslim, Ghulam Muhayy ud-Din, who had earlier taken part in a battle against Banda Singh Bahadur wrote in his *Fatuhat Namah-i-Samadi* that Sikhs did not look upon a woman except as their mother.

In the Sikh system, group ethics and individual morality harmonize and are not fragmented. *Sarbatt da bhala* is, therefore, as much a common human objective as it is a

personal ideal. It must lead to the individual's ethical and spiritual perfection as also to a better world order. Both these goals are enshrined in the daily-repeated maxim *sarbatt da bhala*. Singly and in groups, in their homes and in congregations in their places of worship, the Sikhs conclude their morning and evening prayers, or prayer said at any other time as part of personal piety or of a ceremony with the words—*Nanak nam charhdi kala tere bhane sarbatt da bhala*. This prayer for the welfare of all mankind has thus been institutionalized in Sikhism. For the Sikhs this is not a mere mystical quest, but a firm religious and social goal. Towards its realization a Sikh must constantly endeavour.

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Kj. S.

SARBATT KHALSA (**Major Gurmukh Singh**) (*sarbatt* from Sanskrit *sarva*/*sarvatas* meaning the whole or entire) is a term with a dual connotation. It is a concept as well as an institution. In the conceptual sense, Khalsa is the extension of *sangat*, holy congregation, an institution which has been eulogized in the Sikh Scripture as symbolizing God's Own presence ((GG, 460,1314, 1335). Sarbatt Khalsa in this sense is a mystic entity representing the "integrated conscience" of the entire Sikh people imbued with the all-pervasive spirit of the Divine. Guru Gobind Singh transformed *sangat* into Khalsa subserving God's will or pleasure. A verse in *Sarabloh Granth*, generally ascribed to the Guru, declares: "Khalsa is the army of the Akalpurakh, Khalsa is born of the wish of the Supreme Spirit." Sarbatt Khalsa as the Guru Panth, along with the Guru Granth Sahib, is held to be the true and eternal spiritual successor in the line of personal Gurus ending with Guru Gobind Singh. In the other, historical, sense, Sarbatt Khalsa is the highest organ of the Khalsa Commonwealth representing its "integrated will," which no Sikh—commoner, *sardar* or prince—could dare defy. Sarbatt Khalsa, meeting in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, is the supreme sovereign body, with deliberative and executive powers, including authority to direct the affairs of the community. The institution of Sarbatt Khalsa grew out of the needs and compulsions of the turbulent eighteenth century when Sikhs, driven away from their homes to find shelter in remote hills and forests in large or small batches, the able-bodied baptized Singhs among each forming a fighting band, living off the land in defiance of the imperial might, it became customary for them to assemble at Amritsar, especially on the occasions of Baisakhi and Divali. These gatherings of warriors and non-combatants considered to be representing the entire Panth, came to be called Sarbatt Khalsa. In this general sense, Sarbatt Khalsa

denoted, as it still does, the entire body or the whole commonwealth of Sikhs in whose name *ardas* or the supplicatory prayer was offered individually or at public congregations. The Sarbatt Khalsa discussed and took decisions by common counsel upon matters of policy and upon matters requiring action. Reports on the activities of different *jathas* or groups were taken note of and strategies in respect of their continuing conflict with their Mughal and Afghan oppressors as well as in respect of their relationship with friendly powers such as the Jats and the Marathas were worked out. The earliest known meeting of the Sarbatt Khalsa took place on the occasion of Divali in 1723 when a clash between Tat Khalsa and the Bandais (owing fealty to Banda Singh Bahadur) was averted and amicably settled through the intervention and wise counsel of Bhai Mani Singh. The next notable Sarbatt Khalsa held soon after the martyrdom of Bhai Tara Singh of Dall-Van in 1726 passed a *gurmata*, as the decisions of the Sarbatt Khalsa were designated, laying down a three-fold plan of action, viz. to plunder government treasures in transit between local and regional offices and the central treasury; to raid government armouries for weapons and stables for horses and carriages; and, to eliminate government informers and lackeys. Another Sarbatt Khalsa assembled in 1733 deliberated upon and accepted the government offer of a Nawabship and *jagir* to the Panth. Under a *gurmata* of the Sarbatt Khalsa on 14 October (Divali day) 1745, the active fighting force of the Sikhs was reorganized into 25 *jathas* or bands of about l00 each. A further reorganization into 11 divisions or *misls* forming the Dal Khalsa was made by Sarbatt Khalsa on Baisakhi, 29 March 1748. Thus, Sarbatt Khalsa became the central body of what J. D: Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, terms a "theocratic confederate feudalism" established by the *misls*. But as the *misl* chiefs settled down in their respective territories,

with the threat of invasion or intervention from outside eliminated, they began to bicker and fight amongst themselves. In that situation, Sarbatt Khalsa gatherings became less frequent and less important. Their constitution also changed. Whereas formerly all present could take part in the deliberations, now it was only the *misl* chiefs or their *vakils* (representatives) who mattered. With the establishment of monarchy under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the institution fell into desuetude. The last known Sarbatt Khalsa assembly took place in 1805 to deliberate upon the question of policy to be adopted towards Jasvant Rao Holkar, the Maratha chief who, defeated by the British, had sought the Sikhs' help. Only chosen Sikh chiefs were invited by Ranjit Singh to take part in the convention. Opinions were freely expressed, but the role of the assembly was only advisory, the final word resting with the new sovereign, Ranjit Singh.

Some details about the working of the Sarbatt Khalsa have come down to us through the writings of near contemporaries. According to them, the Sarbatt Khalsa was invariably convened at the Akal Takht. The participants after ablutions in the holy *sarovar* and obeisance at the Harimandar, assembled in the open space in front of the Takht where Guru Granth Sahib was seated attended by Akali (Nihang) officiants. According to John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*:

> When the chiefs and principal leaders meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good and actuated by the principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and the commonwealth to which he belongs.

After the prayers (*ardas*) and distribution of *karah prasad*, the session commenced:

> Then distinction of original tribes, which are on other occasions kept up, are on this occasion laid aside in token of their general and complete union in one cause. The Akalis then exclaim, "Sardars (chiefs), this is a *Gurmata*" on which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs after this sit closer and say to each other, 'the sacred *Granth* is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes and to be united'. This moment of religious fervour and ardent patriotism is taken to reconcile all animosities. They then proceed to consider the danger with which they are threatened, to settle the best plans for averting it and to choose the generals who are to lead their armies against the common enemy.

In recent years efforts have been made to revive the institution of Sarbatt Khalsa to discuss important political issues confronting the Panth but no consensus on its constitution or commonly accepted sanction has so far emerged.

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M. G. S.

SARDAR (**Ganda Singh**), in Persian amalgam of *sar* (head) and *dar* (a suffix derived from the verb *dashtan*, i.e. to hold) meaning holder of headship, is an honorific signifying an officer of rank, a general or chief of a tribe or organization. Sikhs among whom, during the time of the Guru and for half a century thereafter, no words indicative of high rank were current other than the common appellation *bhai* or, rarely *baba* to express reverence due to age or descent from the Gurus, adopted *sardar* for the leaders of their *jathas* or bands fighting against Afghan invaders under Ahmad Shah Durrani. With the expansion of' the fighting force of the Sikhs under the *misls* the number of Sikh *sardars* multiplied. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors, *sardar* came to be used as an appellation for all ready Sikhs as well as for Sikhs in general having Singh as their common surname, although officially *sardar* was a coveted title conferred on generals or civil officers of rank. The British government also used the word selectively by incorporating it in the titles of *sardar sahib* and *sardar bahadur* conferred mostly, but not exclusively, on Sikhs. In the Sikh princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala, Faridkot and Kalsia, too, *sardar* signified rank irrespective of the religious affiliation of the official so entitled. In the army, both under the British and in free India, junior commissioned officers called Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (V. C. Os) before independence are referred to as *sardar sahiban*. Generally, every turbaned Sikh with unshorn hair is addressed as *sardarji*, and it is customary to use *sardar* in place of "Mr." before a Sikh name.

G. S.

SATI (**Sohan Singh**) or *sachch*, Punjabi form of the Sanskrit *satya* or *sat*, lit. truth, in the philosophical sense is essential and ultimate reality as against inessential or partial truth. Rooted in Sanskrit as meaning "to be, live, exist, be present, to abide, dwell, stay", *satya* means " true, real, pure," as also the "quality of being abidingly true, real, existent." *Satya* or *satyam* is a widely used term in the philosophical thought of India. It signifies eternality, continuity and unicity. In the Upanisads *sat* (truth) is the first of the three essential characteristics of Brahman, the other two being *chit* (intelligence) and *anand* (bliss). In Vedanta philosophy, the one permanent reality, Brahman, is called Sat, while the phenomenal fluxional world is named *asat* (non-real). In the Sikh scripture and other religious literature, *sati*, or *sachch* appears with two closely related yet distinguishably different connotations. At the metaphysical level, *sati* is the Ultimate Reality, truly existent, changeless and everlasting. At the level of physical existence, *sati* or *sachch* carries an ethical import as correctness, truthfulness and goodness as against *kur*, wrongness or falsehood. The varied and wide use of the cognates of *sat* or *sati* such as *satsangat*, *satigur*, *satpurakh*, *sachkhand*, *sachiar* and *sachcha patsah* illustrate the role of the term in the spiritual as well as in the ethical context.

In the *Mul Mantra*, The One is also named *sati* besides being given other attributive names such as *karta purakh* (the creative male principle), *nirbhau* (without fear), *nirvair* (without rancour*), akal murati* (the timeless form), *ajuni* (unborn) and *saibhang* (self-existent). Guru Arjan amplifies, "The tongue utters (mostly) your attributive names; Your primordial name is *sati*" (GG, 1083); and this "True Name of God is ever solace-giver" (GG, 284). Elsewhere in the Holy Scripture *sachu sabadu* (the Word Truth) and *sacha sabadu* (the True Word) or simply *sach(ch)a* (the True One) have

been used as synonyms of *satinam* to describe God (GG, 34, 580, and 581). Besides using *sati* or *sachch* as a name for God, the words have also been used as adjectives for the Ultimate Reality which is immutably true, transcending time and space, beyond life and death, never old, forever new. In the opening line of *Japu*, he is described as *adi sachu*, *jugadi sachu*; *hai bhi sachu, nanak hosi bhi sachu*— True (was He) in the (beginningless) beginning, in the beginning of the cosmic time; True is (He in the present) too, True shall (He) be, O Nanak, (for ever in the future) (GG, 1). Towards the end of *Japu*, the highest spiritual region, the abode of the Formless One, is described as *sach khand*.

According to Sikh cosmogony, the universe was created by the Transcendent God out of Himself at His own pleasure, and in His own will. He may withdraw it into Himself when He so wills it. The created world has therefore a dual nature. It is *sat* (real and no illusion) because it was created by the Real One, who is immanent in it while He wills it to last: *api sati kia sabhu sati* (He Himself is Truth and true is His creation) (GG, 284). At the same time it is not *sati* (immutable and ever-existent) because its existence is contingent upon His Will. Thus, although the universe of time and space emanates from *sati* (the Ultimate Reality), it does not exhaust the latter nor limit it within its own temporal and spatial limits. The Transcendent *sati* is *alakh* (unknowable) and cannot be known because the created cannot know the creator (*karte ki miti na janai kia*) (GG, 285); yet the *agam* (unapproachable) and the *agochar* (inaccessible through the senses) can be comprehended through the Guru's *sabad* (instruction) (GG, 130). This is accomplished in two ways. One, the Guru by opening the inner eyes of the seeker's higher consciousness reveals to him the Satya that permeates the entire creation, so that

"Nanak's Master, who is beyond the world and beyond the revelations of scriptures, becomes distinctly manifest" (GG, 397). Secondly, the seeker who through meditation upon the *sati* internalized it himself becomes one with *sati* (GG, 284). In Sikh theology this happens with God's grace. In fact, *sati* (God) in grace reveals itself to the chosen one through the Guru, who is already so chosen and becomes one with *sati*. The medium of communication in this process is *sabad* (word) or *bani* (Guru's utterance). "The Guru, the *bani*, and Brahm are all the same and are realized through the *sabad* (GG, 39). God's *nadar* (grace) is sovereign, subject alone to His *raza* (will). However, two circumstances can help the seeker to deserve and receive it. One is meeting with the *satiguru* (True Guru) (GG, 33, 313), and the other is to know the *jugati* (method), which comprises "cleansing the mind of the dirt of *kur* (falsehood) and cultivating love of *sachch*" (GG, 468).

This brings us to the existential level, where *sati* or *sachch* is an ethical category which sustains *dharma*, the governing principle of the world of time and space. It forms the basis of *hukam* (law), *niau* (justice) and *changiai* (goodness). At the individual level, *sachch* as truthfulness is the most desirable virtue. "*Sachch* (truth) is supreme, yet *sachu achar* (true living) ranks above it" (GG, 62).

Sikhism is a humanitarian creed, in which theological is closely related to the sociological aspect. *Sati* (truth) is here not only an abstract notion of Supreme Reality, but is also a practical principle of human conduct. The ideal set for a Sikh is to become *sachiar* (truth-seeking person), and the basic human problem, set forth in the opening stanza of Guru Nanak's *Japu*, is "How to become *sachiar*? How to demolish the wall of *kur* (falsehood)?" And the solution suggested in the line immediately succeeding is "to

conduct oneself under His *hukam* (Will) and *raza* (pleasure)" (GG, l). In practical terms, Guru Nanak instructs, "Test your mind against the touchstone of truth: guided by Guru's light, deal in the merchandise of truth; be a *gurmukhi* (guru loving) so that you despise *kur* and are in love with *sach*: loving *sach*, you shall be absorbed in *sach* and shall find the jewel of *nam* (*satinam*) which lies (dormant) in your own mind" (GG, 22). Guru Amar Das declares, "Honour and good name arise out of true word; seeing *sachu* and speaking *sachu*, body and mind acquire truth" (GG, 69).

That truthful living implies truthful actions (*sachu karam*, or *sachi kar*) and true discipline (*sachu sanjam*) at individual level is obvious, but Sikhism being a congregation based faith the Gurus also emphasize need for true company (*sachi sangat* or *satsangat*) (GG, 69, 586). *Satsangat* is defined as "a school for learning virtue" (GG, 1316) and "a place where the One (God's) Name is solely talked" (GG, 72).

Sati or *sachch* is both the name given the Supreme Reality and the supreme good to be realized spiritually as well as in individual and social life. This many-splendoured truth is "the overlord of all, accessible only to one whom He blesses" (GG, 922). It is "the panacea for all ailments; it flushes out the filth of sin" (GG, 468).

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Sn. S.

SEVA (**J. S Neki**), from Sanskrit rot *sev* (to serve, wait or attend upon, honour, or worship, is usually translated as 'service' or 'serving' which commonly relates to work paid for, but does not convey the sense in which the term is used in the Sikh tradition. The word *seva* has, in fact had two distinct connotations; one, it means to serve, to attend to, to render obedience to and the second, to worship, to adore, to reverence, to pay homage to. Traditionally in the Indian (Hindu) society, *seva* in the sense of worship (of gods) has been the preserve of the high-caste Brahmans, while that in the sense of service (to man) relegated to the lowest of the castes. In the Sikh sense, the two connotations seem to have merged together for the reasons: first, because of its egalitarian meaning. Sikhism does not recognize caste distinctions, and hence no distinctive caste roles in it; and second, God in Sikhism is not apart from His creatures. He pervades His Creation (GG, 1350). Therefore service rendered to humanity (i.e. God in man) is indeed considered a form of worship. In fact, in Sikhism, no worship is conceivable without *seva* (GG, 1013). The Sikh is forbidden from serving anyone apart from God ('Serve you the Lord alone: none else must you serve' ((GG, 490). However, this also means that whomsoever we serve, we really serve our Lord through him. Therefore it becomes incumbent upon the Sikh to render *seva* with the highest sense of duty since thereby he or she is worshipping the Lord.

Seva in Sikhism is imperative for spiritual life. It is the highest penance (GG, 423). It is a means to acquiring the highest merit. The Sikh often prays to God for a chance to render *seva*. Says Guru Arjan, Nanak V, "I beg to serve those who serve you (GG, 43)" and "I, your servant, beg for *seva* of your people, which is available through

good fortune alone (GG, 802)." According to Guru Amar Das, "He who is turned towards the Guru finds repose and joy in *seva*" (GG, 125).

Three varieties of *seva* are sanctioned in the Sikh lore: that rendered through the corporal instrument (*tan*), that through the mental apparatus (*man*) and that through the material wherewithal (*dhan*).

The first of them is considered to be the highest of all and is imperatively prescribed for every Sikh. "Cursed are the hands and feet that engage not in *seva*" (Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, 27.1). In traditional Indian society work involving corporal labour was considered low and relegated to the humblest castes. By sanctifying it as an honourable religious practice, the Sikh Gurus established the dignity of labour, a concept then almost unknown to the Indian society. Not only did the Gurus sanctify it; they also institutionalized it, e.g. service in *Guru ka Langar* (the Guru's community kitchen) and serving the *sangat* (holy assembly) in other ways such as by grinding corn for it, fanning it to soften the rigour of a hot day and drawing water for it. " I beg of you, O, Merciful One, make me the slave of your Slaves. . . Let me have the pleasure of fanning them, drawing water for them, grinding corn for them and of washing their feet," prays Guru Arjan (GG, 518).

Seva through the mental apparatus (*man*) lies in contributing ones talents—creative, communicative, managerial, etc.—to the corporate welfare of the community and mankind in general. It also lies in sharing the pain of others. Response to the pain of others is a *sine qua non* of the membership of the brotherhood of man. That is why the Sikh prayer said in unison ends with a supplication for the welfare of all. *Seva* of this

kind is motivated not by the attitude of compassion alone, but primarily to discover practical avenues for serving God through man.

Seva through material means (*dhan*) or philanthropy (*dan*) was particularly sought to be made non-personal. The offerings (*kar bheta*) made to the Gurus and the *dasvandh* (tithe) contributed by the Sikhs went straight into the common coffers of the community. Personal philanthropy can be debasing for the receiver and ego-entrenching for the giver, but self-effacing community service is ennobling. *Seva* must be so carried out as to dissolve the ego and lead to self-transcendence, which is the ability to acknowledge and respond to that which is other than oneself. *Seva* must serve to indicate the way in which such transcendence manifests in one's responsiveness to the needs of others in an impersonal way.

The Sikh is particularly enjoined upon to render *seva* to the poor. "The poor man's mouth is the depository of the Guru", says the *Rahitnama* of Chaupa Singh. The poor and the needy are, thus, treated as legitimate recipients of *dan* (charity) and not the Brahman who had traditionally reserved for himself this privilege. Even in serving the poor, one serves not the individual concerned, but God Himself through him. Even as one feeds the hungry, it has been the customary Sikh practice to pray: "The grain, O God, is your own gift. Only the *seva* is mine which please be gracious enough to accept."

In the Sikh way of life, *seva* is considered the prime duty of the householder (*grihasthi*). "That home in which holymen are not served, God is served not. Such mansions must be likened to graveyards where ghosts alone abide", says Kabir (GG, 1374). The Sikhs are all ordained to be householders, and *seva* their duty. In Sikh thought, the polarity of renunciation is not with attachment, but with *seva*.

True *seva* according to Sikh scriptures must be without desire (*nishkam*), guileless (*nishkapat*), in humility (*nimarta*), with purity of intention (*hirda suddh*), with sincerity (*chit lae*) and in utter selflessness (*vichon ap gavae*). Such *seva* for the Sikh is the doorway to dignity as well as to *mukti* (liberation). "If one earns merit here through *seva*, one will get a seat of honour in His Court hereafter" (GG, 26).

According to Sikh tenets, "You become like the one you serve" (GG, 549). Therefore, for those who desire oneness with God, serving God and God alone is the prime way. But God in Sikhism is transcendent as well as immanent. The Transcendent One is ineffable and can only be conceived through contemplation. Service of God, therefore, only relates to the immanent aspect of God and comprises service of His creatures. Humanitarian service is thus the Sikh ideal of *seva*.

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J. S. N.

SHABAD (**W. H. McLeod**) (Sanskrit *sabda*, of obscure etymology) is generally rendered as sound, voice or tone. Another series of meanings includes word, utterance, speech. In distinctive Sikh usage *shabad* means a hymn or sacred work from the Guru Granth Sahib. In the theological sense, it stands for the 'Word' revealed by the Guru. In the Guru Granth Sahib it is spelt as *sabad* with its inflectional variations *sabadu, sabadi* and *sabade*. Its equivalent substitutes used in the Sikh Scripture are *dhun* or *dhuni* (Sanskrit *dhvani*), *nad, anahat* or *anahad nad* (Sanskrit *nada* or *anahata nada*), *bachan*, *bani*, *kavao*. *Sabad* is often linked with *guru* to form *gursabad* or *gur ka sabad* (Guru's word). Inasmuch as *shabad* is connected with both sound and voice, in English it may be rendered as 'word-sound.'

In the Nyaya and Vaisesika systems, *sabda* as verbal testimony is acknowledged as a valid means of knowledge (*sabda-pramana*). Grammarians such as Yaska, Panini and Katyayana take *sabda* or *pada* as a unit of language or speech (*vak* or *vaka*). The word *sabda* first occurs in a philosophical sense in a late Upanisad, the *Maitri Upanisad*. This text states that Brahman is of two types, *sabda brahman* and *asabda brahman*, Brahman with sound and soundless Brahman, respectively. According to some schools, notably *tantric*, the essence of *sabda* lies in its significative power (*sakti*): This power is defined as a relation between *sabda* and *artha*, between word-sound and meaning.

In Guru Nanak's usage, and subsequently in that of his successor Gurus, *shabad* means the Word of divine revelation or any aspect of Akalpurakh's revelation to mankind. The Word is 'spoken' by the voice of *Akalpurakh*. The 'voice' is the divine Guru who may be one of the ten personal Gurus of the Sikh tradition, but may also be the utterance of the mystical Guru. This was particularly the case with Guru Nanak for there

was no personal Guru who could speak the Word of Akalpurakh to him. The Gurus' voice—their utterances—as preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib is *gurshabad* or *gurbani*. It is noteworthy that the term *shabad*, which occurs independently in the Guru Granth Sahib 1271 times, is also linked 572 times with the term *guru*. It is nowhere used in the sense of ordinary human word or speech; in reference to common human speech other terms such as *bolna*, *boli*, *akhan*, *kahan—kahavan* and *kathan* are used.

Being a term of mystical import, *shabad* is capable of multiple implications. In Sikhism, *shabad* or the Word originally belongs to God, the Guru being only the instrument through which it is articulated. Guru Nanak calls his own speech as *khasam ki bani*—the utterance of the Lord Master (GG, 722); for Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, it is *satigur ki bani*—utterance of the true Guru—which the Creator makes him articulate (GG, 308); and Guru Arjan, Nanak V, says, *nanaku bolai tis ka bolaia*—Nanak speaks what He makes him speak (GG, 1271). At places in the Scripture, *shabad* is directly identified with God Himself (GG, 162, 448, 945). Elsewhere it is called Guru (GG, 601, 635). In some cases *shabad* is used in contexts which seem to make it for all practical purposes a Synonym of *nam* (GG, 932, 1125). This is understandable, for in Sikh theology God and Guru, *shabad* and *nam* share common range of meaning. God speaks through the eternal Guru and also he makes himself known through *shabad*, the Word, so that "the Word is the Guru," as says Guru Nanak (GG, 943). At the same time, God makes the principles of liberation known to mankind through the immanent pattern of *nam* The three terms, *nam*, *shabad* and *guru* overlap in meaning, each pointing towards God. At times they mean exactly the same thing. Each of the three terms has, however, a certain area which is explicitly its own. Akalpurakh speaks through the eternal Guru and

for His 'voice' the only possible word is *guru*. To mankind he makes known the principles of liberation and for this immanent pattern the only effective word is *nam*. The 'Word' that he speaks in making known this pattern of liberation is the *shabad* and for that 'Word' *shabad* is the only term that will serve.

The *shabad* or the Word is described in its frequent usage by Guru Nanak and his successors more in terms of what it does than in terms of what it literally is. This is natural, for it is the function which gives it meaning and it is in actual experience that it is to be known rather than in any purely intellectual sense. One of the shades of signification of *shabad* is *hukam*, the Divine cosmic order for the Divine creative might. The word *kavao*, a synonym of *shabad*, is used in this sense (GG, 3, 1003). And *shabad* itself: " By the Divine Word occur creation and dissolution; by the divine Word again comes about creation—*utapati parlau sabade hovai/sabade hi phiri opati hovai*" (GG, 117). Again: "*chahudisi hukamu varatai prabh tera chahudisi namu patalan, sabh mahi sabadu varatai prabh sacha karami milai baialan*—in all four directions, Lord! is thy order operative; in all four directions and in the nether regions prevails thy Name. In all beings is manifest the eternal Lord's holy Word. By good fortune is the Eternal attained (GG, 1275). "*Shabad* not only creates, it also sustains (GG, 228, 282) as it also destroys and recreates (GG, 112.).

The function of the *shabad* is that it provides the means whereby man can know both Akalpurakh and the path which leads to Him, the way in which the individual may secure release from the bonds of transmigration and so attain union with God in Guru Nanak's understanding of the term *sahaj*. Again and again *shabad* is declared to be the essential pointer to the way of liberation, the means whereby a person can be made aware

of the presence around him and within him of the *nam* or divine Name. The path to liberation lies through recognition of the immanent Name (*nam*) and the duty of disciplined *nam simaran* or remembrance of the divine Name. The prime purpose of the *shabad* is to reveal this path, in all its wonder and variety, to the person who is prepared to be a believer. Given the initial act of Akalpuarkh's favour (*nadar*), there arises in men and women a longing for the transmigratory bonds to be broken, leading to a state of union with the divine. To such people the *shabad* is spoken, or we may say, the *shabad* speaks. The complete mystery of *shabad* is not completely within the range of human understanding, for the *shabad* shares in the infinity of Akalpurakh, but it is sufficiently within reach to be readily accessible to all who desire it. In this sense the Gurus have called *shabad* a *dipak* (lamp) bringing enlightenment (*jnana*) *gian* for mankind to see the path (GG 124, 664, 798). Elsewhere it is described as pure and purifying (GG, 32, 86, 121).

Shabad is the subtle knowledge essential for emancipation. Says Guru Ram Das: "*tera sabadu agocharu gurmukhi paiai Nanak nami samai jiu*—Thy invisible knowledge by the Master's guidance is obtained; saith Nanak, this by absorption in the Name is attained" (GG, 448). "What can one offer to him through whom *sabda* is received? Offer him thy head, annulling egoism—*tisu kia dijai ji sabadu sunae*. . . . *ihu siru dijai apu gavae*. . . ."(GG, 424). "Quaff the Master's teaching that is *amrit* or elixir; thus shall thy self be rendered pure—*gur ka sabadu amrit rasu piu ta tera hoi nirmal jiu*"(GG, 891). The Guru's *sabda* is like an anchor for the wavering mind. Guru Arjan says in the *Sukhmani*; "As is the edifice propped up by the pillar, so is the Guru's *sabda* support of the mind—*jiu mandar kau thamai thammanu, tiu gur ka sabadu manahi asthammanu*"

(GG, 282). In the *Japu* (GG, 8) in the line *ghariai sabadu sachi taksai*, i.e. forge God-consciousness in such a holy mint, *shabad* is used in the sense of God-consciousness (*jnana*). A similar sense is yielded by an affirmation in Guru Amar Das' Anandu: "*Andarahu jin ka mohu tuta tin ka Sabadu sachai savaria*—they whose attachment to the world ceases their spiritual vision is purified" (GG, 917).

One of the features of Sikh doctrine of *shabad* is the emphasis placed on *nam*, i.e. repetition of the Name (*nam*) of God; this name is *shabad*. The recitation (*path*) of the Guru Granth Sahib and of the texts from it is an essential part of Sikh practice. One of the nine forms of *bhakti* is listening (*sravana*) to *shabad, nam, bani*, i.e. words denoting God and His greatness. Words or sounds are the means of celebrating and singing the glories of God and this act is called *kirtan*. Since worship of images is forbidden in his faith, a Sikh takes the help of words and sounds in his daily meditation (*dhian, dhyana*) on God. These words and sounds are literary and vocal symbols of the unmanifest sound (*sabadu agocharu*) which is of the nature of light (*joti—sarup*). Without this luminous Word-sound there is darkness in and out. The light of *shabad* is the principle of knowledge by means of which one knows the reality of God. He who succeeds in closing the nine doors (*nau darvaje*) in his body and in opening the tenth door (*dasvan duar*) by breaking the hard wall of ignorance, enters the luminous chamber which is His own real abode. Here he listens to that mystic melody which is unstruck or deathless sound (*anahada nad, anahata sabda*). Knowledge or understanding of *shabad* is important, like the recitation of it. One merges in the Truth only when one comprehends the utterance (*bani*) and has experienced the sound (*shabad*). To this concept of *shabad* are added in Sikhism the

necessity of a virtuous living and of the grace of blessing of God or Guru in enabling one to discover the *shabad*.

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W. H. M.

SHARDHA ((**L. M. Joshi**) or Sardha (Skt. *sraddha*), a conscious positive mental attitude towards a person owing to some special development of a virtue or power in him, is closely connected with faith or *bhakti*, i.e. loving devotion to God. Etymologically speaking, it is a compound word formed by a combination of *srat*, 'heart' and *dha*, 'to put', meaning to put one's heart and mind on something. Translated into English, belief, trust, confidence and faith are the terms which put forth different shades of *sraddha*. In so far as *sraddha* is related to *sradha*, a funeral rite in Hinduism performed in honour of the departed spirits of dead ancestors or relatives, it can be interpreted as reverence.

Shardha or faith is the bedrock of all religions. In the Vedic texts, *sraddha* denotes a belief in the powers of rituals and the priests for securing all that is desired including *svarga*, heaven. The Upanisads, however, present us with new dimensions of *sraddha*. In these texts, *sraddha* emerges as a moral and religious notion. Here it is closely connected with the ideas of *dhayana*, *yoga*, *karma*, *sansara* and *moksa*, the ideas which were originally peculiar to Sramana thought. The *Mundaka Upanisad* representative of the Sramanic impact treats the entire heritage of old Vedic knowledge as lower and declares that knowledge as higher (*paravidya*) which reveals the Indestructible (*Mundak*. 1.1.5.). This higher knowledge which leads to spiritual emancipation is the object of *sraddha*. However, it must be noted here that the nature and function of *sraddha* in these texts are relative to ritualistic, theistic, dualistic and non-dualistic theologies. The *Bhagavadgita* gives to this term a definitive meaning for subsequent Brahmanical developments. According to the *Bhagavadgita*, faith (*sraddha*) is a factor in *mukti* (III.31): those endowed with faith attain wisdom, and those without faith perish (IV. 39-40): faith is directly associated with devotion and adoration (VII. 21):

among all the yogis one endowed with faith is the best. This soteriological significance and importance of *sraddha* is tacitly accepted in all the sects of the Brahmanical tradition including Saivism, Saktism, Vaisnavism and the yogic schools. In addition to God or goddess, the prescribed paths, and the scripture, in these schools, the position of teacher or guru becomes an increasingly important object of *sraddha*. The concept of *sraddha* occupies an important place in the Sramanic traditions of Jainism and Buddhism also.

The word *sardha* occurs in the Guru Granth Sahib at numerous places. Often it is associated with other related theological terms such as *prem*, *bhagati* (*bhakti*), *puja* and *seva* (devotion, adoration and service, respectively). The necessity of faith and confidence is tacitly accepted in Sikhism and there is a general uniformity in its meaning throughout the Sikh texts. Besides *sardha* we find other words, *nihcha* (*nischaya*), *bisvas* and *partiti* (GG, 87, 284, 292, 877, 1270); these words may be translated as 'faith', 'belief' and 'confidence'. The word *partiti* (Skt. *pratiti*) can also be translated as faith or belief. One has *partiti* when one has clear apprehension of or insight into anything; it gives the sense of complete understanding, ascertainment and conviction. By implication *partiti* means credit, respect, trust, confirmation and acknowledgement. *Partiti* thus is a synonym of *shardha* in Sikhism. It is a cardinal moral virtue and a prerequisite of piety. The nature and function of *shardha* in Sikh religion and the way of life cannot be understood without recourse to Sikh theology.

Devotion to God proceeds from faith in God: faith in God is linked to love for God: love for God manifests itself in adoration and service. It is, therefore, appropriate to understand the concept of *shardha* in the context of *bhagti*, *prem*, *puja* and *seva*. All these terms bear a significance in Sikh teaching only when we consider their meaning in

relation to the reality of Supreme Lord (*paramesvara*). The first object of faith in Sikhism is thus the supreme Lord. His nature and existence are revealed by the Teacher (*Guru*) who is another object of faith. This office of revealer and guide has been held by a line of ten teachers; the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh are therefore equally the centre of faith in this tradition. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Holy Granth assumed the authority of the Teacher. It is now justly called the Guru Granth Sahib, the Book that is the Teacher or the Teacher-Scripture. This being the collection of canonical texts of Sikhism, is the third major object of faith in Sikhism. In this system *shardha* is directed to God, Guru and the Granth.

Belief in God and love of God go together: the functional value of loving and believing leads to the same purpose and would seem to be equal. The devotee is said to spread the bed made of *shardha* for his Lord—*hari hari sardha sej vichhai prabhu chhodi na sakai* (GG, 836); because of *shardha* fixed on his Beloved he cannot live even for a moment—*sardha lagi sangi pritamai iku tilu rahanu na jai* (GG, 928). To have faith in God means to have love for god, and vice versa, to have love for god means to have faith in God.

As an ultimate commitment and supreme concern, *shardha* may be summed up as concentration of belief in God. It has been said that those that have faith in Ram Nam, do not turn their thoughts to any thing else—*jin sardha ram nam lagi tin duja chitu na laia ram* (GG, 444). The nature of faith is unifying, which is also to say, it is exclusive and undivided. One cannot have faith in both Divinity and egoity, in God and not-God at the same time. Firm and undivided faith leads to union with God. He who is endowed with

true faith is united to God—*jin kai mani sacha bisvasu, pekhi pekhi suami ki sobha anandu sada ulasu* (GG, 677).

Occasionally this term is used in the sense of a wish or longing for God. Thus when we read *nanak ki prabh sardha puri*, we have to understand it in the sense that 'God has fulfilled the desire of Nanak' (GG, 893). Again, *chiti avai ta sardha puri*—when awareness (of God) comes then the longing is satisfied (GG, 114). We can even say that in these usages *sardha* is like *mansa*, thought, wish, longing, quest. God is the object of love and object of faith and therefore the object of quest.

Although God is attainable through love and faith or loving faith, it is clearly taught that one becomes faithful through God's grace (*hari kirpa*), faith in His name is inspired by Him—*hari hari kripa karahu jagjivan mai sardha nami lagavaigo* (GG, 1310). Faith in God comes through faith in Guru who unites the seeker with the former—*sardha sardha upai milae mo kau hari gur guri nistare* (GG, 983). God's servants are very good because they uphold Hari in their heart with faith, and Hari is so good that He accepts the faith of His followers and upholds their honour—*prabh ke sevak bahutu ati nike mani sardha kari hari dhare*; *mere prabhi sardha bhagati mani bhavai jan ki paij savare* (GG, 982). Those who with faith sing, listen, and cause others to listen (the glory of God) and drink the Divine elixir (*hari-ras*), they are indeed fortunate—*gavat sunat, sunavat sardha hari rasu pi vadbhage* (GG, 1306).

In addition to God, Guru and the Granth, a fourth field for the cultivation of faith in Sikhism consists of the holy company (*sadhsangati*) of the devotees (*sadh, sant*). Faith rises in their company and one enjoys the taste of the Divine essence through Guru's Word—*mili sangat sardha upajai gur sabdi hari rasu chakhu* (GG, 997).

Happiness (*sukh*), peace and longing (*sardha*) all these are attained with the help of the holy —*sukh sital sardha sabh piri hoe sant sahai* (GG, 1000). The Scripture lays down that the dust of the feet of those sages should be kissed with love and confidence who have given their lives for the sake of God—*jin hari arathi sariru lagaia gur sadhu bahu saradha lai mukhi dhura* (GG, 698). The sages found Hari through faith; they found Hari through the word of the Teacher. That is to say, faith in the Teacher's word is the door to God-realization. The word *gurmukh* literally means 'Teacher's mouth'; it symbolically means the word (*sabda*) or speech (*bani*) which comes out of Guru's mouth. This word or speech documented in the Granth is an object of faith because it is the vehicle to go beyond *sansara*. The *gurmukh* or Teacher's word is therefore called the door of deliverance (*mokhu-duar*). As is well known, the word *gurmukh* also means a pious person imbued with faith, who has turned towards God or the Guru, a God-faced person. As such, the *gurmukh* is the ideal person of Sikh culture and, therefore, an embodiment of *shardha*, faith.

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L. M. J.

SIKH (**Ganda Singh**). The word *sikh* goes back to Sanskrit *sisya*, meaning a learner or disciple. In Pali, *sisya* became *sissa*. The Pali word *sekha* (also *sekkha*) means a pupil or one under training in a religious doctrine (*sikkha*, *siksa*). The Punjabi form of the word was *sikh*. The term Sikh in the Punjab and elsewhere came to be used for the disciples of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and his nine spiritual successors. Nanakpanthis (lit. followers of the path of Nanak) was also the term employed, especially in the initial stages. Mobid Zulfiqar Ardastani, a contemporary of Guru Hargobind (1595-1664) and Guru Har Rai (1630-61) defines Sikhs in his Persian work *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* as "Nanakpanthis better known as Guru-Sikhs (who) do not believe in idols and temples." According to the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, passed by the Punjab legislature, "Sikh means a person who professes the Sikh religion." The Act further provides that in case of doubt a person shall be deemed to be a Sikh if he subscribes to the following declaration: "I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in the Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the Ten Gurus, and that I have no other religion." The Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1971, passed by Indian Parliament, lays down a stricter definition in that it requires keeping hair unshorn as an essential qualification for a Sikh and that, besides belief in the Guru Granth Sahib and the Ten Gurus, it requires a Sikh to affirm that he follows their teachings. The latter Act thus excludes Sahajdharis (gradualists who profess faith in Sikhism but have not yet complied with the injunction about unshorn hair).

The Sikhs believe in the unicity of God, the Creator who is formless and eternal, transcendent and all-pervasive. The unicity of God implies, on the one hand, non-belief in gods and goddesses, idols and idol-worship, and on the other rejection of divisions among men on the grounds of birth, caste or country. In the Sikh temple called *gurdwara*

no images are installed or worshipped. The sole object of reverence therein is the Holy Book. The Sikhs, considering God's creation to be real and not mere illusion, believe in the dignity of worldly living provided, however, that it be regulated according to a high moral standard. The human birth is a valued gift earned by worthy actions, and must be utilized to do prayer and engage in devotion and perform good deeds. The popular Sikh formula for an upright living is *nam japna, kirat karni, vand chhakna* (constant remembrance of God's Name, earning one's livelihood through honest labour, and sharing one's victuals with others). Their faith requires the Sikhs to be energetic and courageous. A hymn by Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV, adjures a Sikh to rise early in the morning, make his ablutions, recite *gurbani*, the holy hymns, and not only himself remember God while performing his normal duties but also assist others to do likewise. Guru Tegh Bahadur, Nanak IX, defines the ideal man as one who frightens no one, nor submits to fear himself. Sikhs are generally householders. There is no priestly class among them. All on condition of fitness can perform the priestly function. Women among them enjoy equal rights.

Although a person born and brought up in a Sikh family is generally accepted as a Sikh, yet, strictly speaking, initiation through a specified ceremony is essential. Up to the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, initiation through *charan pahul* was in vogue. According to it, the novice was required to drink water touched by or poured over the Guru's toe. Guru Gobind Singh introduced *khande da amrit* or rites of the double-edged sword and prescribed the wearing of five symbols including *kesa* or unshorn hair, which form is obligatory for all Sikhs. Exemption, that also temporary, is claimed by Sahajdhari Sikhs.

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G. S.

SIKH COSMOLOGY (**Gurdip Singh Bhandari**). From the very beginning man has been curious to know about the structure and constitution of the Universe and its origin. To locate the stable base of this universe and to fix his own place in it have been the subjects of his constant search and speculation for him. The Gurus brought their own mystical and philosophical powers to solving the riddle. In their poetry in the Guru Granth Sahib, they have expressed their sense of wonder and sung paeans of praise for the Almighty. A minute observation of the phenomenon of nature forms an important part of the Sikh metaphysical insight. It brings into view a palpable vision of the Creator and His creation. The medium used is poetry of far-reaching import. It is at the same time poetry of elemental beauty as well as of grandeur.

The Gurus have unequivocally and forcefully stressed the unicity of the Godhead. There is no room in it for any dualistic or polytheistic doctrines. The deities of the Hindu mythology, for instance, have no place in their belief as the objects of worship; nor was anyone of them regarded co-eternal with God. The matter out of which forms are shaped and the selves that inhabit them are eternal in Him but not with Him. Again, the God of Sikh teaching is not a mere concept or principle; He is the Ultimate Reality. True and eternal, He is the Power that has existed forever and will continue to exist when everything else has ceased. This power is endowed with will and supported by a conscious intelligence, which serves as the chief instrument for the fulfilment of His designs and purposes. With this will He comes out of His transcendental state of absorption in the Self and becomes the all-powerful immanent Creator (*karta purakh*). When He so wills, He draws it back, which is its dissolution.

The world for the Gurus is a creation, and owes its existence to the will of the Divine. It is the Creator's sporting gesture, *lila*. He Himself is its material as well as efficient cause. Says Guru Nanak, " *tun karta purakhu agammu hai ape sristi upati*—You are the creator, unknowable; you have yourself created the world" (GG, 138). There was a time when the world had not yet appeared and there will be a time when the world will again disappear. Says Guru Arjan, "*kai bar pasario pasar sada sada ik akankar*—Many a time you have projected this creation, yet you always remained the only formless One" (GG, 276).

The Gurus have called the pre-creation state *sunya*, meaning 'empty void', 'negative abyss,' 'nothingness.' Describing this stage, Guru Nanak says:

For countless ages utter darkness prevailed
There was neither earth nor heaven,
The will of the Infinite Lord reigned everywhere.
There was neither day nor night,
Nor sun nor moon,
Only Sunya (the Absolute self) stayed in solitary meditation. (GG, 1035)

Again,

For a good many ages
Utter darkness filled everywhere.
T he Creator was wholly absorbed in deep meditation.
There existed only His true *nam*, His glory,
And the lustre of His eternal throne. (GG, 1023)

Many schools of thought have put forth the view that the world was born out of nothingness. However, the *Sunya* of the Gurus does not correspond to the Buddhistic concept, nor the absolute nothingness, the 'ex-nihilo' of other schools. The "nothingness" of the Gurus refers to absence of creation, and not to the absence of the Creator or His essence or potency. The Gurus have used "*Sunya*" in conjunction with terms like *samadhi*, *tari* (trance, meditation) or *sahaj* (equipoise, balance) or *sach* (holy truth). These terms describe the state of complete tranquillity and oneness of the Absolute Self, and refer to that latent form in which every aspect of creation lies dormant in Him, waiting for the operation of the Divine urge for its unfoldment. With this urge, from apparent nothingness, the Formless assumes form, "The unattributed becomes the Attributed –"*nirgun te sargunu thia*" (GG, 940) and thus this world of a myriad colours takes shape.

The Gurus do not subscribe to the view that the world suddenly appeared in its finished form. It has passed through a gradual process of evolution. They also reject the view that it has been 'produced' or 'manufactured' mechanically as an artisan might produce an article out of a given substance. God and His creation are one—the creation was merged in Him. God raised the creation out of Himself. It is a gradual unfoldment of what lay folded within the Ultimate cause—the Absolute Self.

From the state of *Sunya*,

The latent form became active.

The elements of air and water

Were evolved out of *Sunya*. . .

Within the fire

Water and living beings is His Light,

And the power of Creation lies within *Sunya* . . .

From *Sunya* came out the moon

The sun and the firmament. . .

The earth and heaven have been evolved out of *Sunya*. (GG, 1037-38)

Guru Nanak mentions three stages in the process of cosmic evolution. The first is the atmosphere when there was only all-pervasive air. The second stage was that of water; the third was lithosphere when the crust of the earth took form. Situated in the midst of the elements, the self has to evolve its potentialities to merge into the Absolute, which is the state of liberation. Thus, a theory of spiritual evolution is implicit in this process.

The source and origin of Creation is *shabad*, *sabda*, (sound), *nam, nad, bani* or *anahad sabad*. The will of God (*hukam*) becomes synonymous with the word of God. Guru Nanak says, "*kita pasau eko kavau tis te hoe lakh dariau*—With his Primal Word (*kavao*) originated creation and millions of rivers were set flowing" (GG, 3). Guru Amar Das says "*upati paralu sabade havai sabade hi phiri opati hovai*—Through *sabad* (word) creation and dissolution take place and through *sabad* creation takes rebirth" (GG, 117).

The creative power of *sabad* (Word) is a concept common to most religious traditions. *Sabad* has been referred to as *nad*, *vani* or *vak* in Vedic and Upanisadic literature. There are clear references to it in the Zoroastrian *sroasha*, the Word or Logos of the Christians, and Kun or Kalima of the Muslims. To quote the Bible, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not made anything" (John, 1,1). The

poets of the *nirguna* school like Kabir and Dadu also equate the *sabad* (Word) with the Creator.

Sabad (sound manifested) produces the subtle element *akash* (ether), from which the other four subtle elements emerge, which in turn give rise to the five gross elements. Air evolves from ether, fire from air, water from fire, and earth from water. The Gurus regard these five elements as the basic constituents of the whole creation. Guru Nanak says, "*panch tatu sunnahu pargasa*—From *sunya* the five elements manifested themselves" (GG, 1038) "*Panch tatu mili ihu tanu kia*—The human frame is also constituted of (these) five elements" (GG, 1039).

The evolution of the world from *sabad* (Word) indicates that the Gurus do not accept the traditional division of the world into matter and spirit. Since the light of the Lord (*sabad*) pervades the entire universe, what has sprung from Him cannot be lifeless or inert. Guru Nanak says "*sache te pavana bhaia pavane te jalu hoi*—From the eternal being air evolved and from air water" (GG, 19). Lifeless matter can neither respond to outer and inner influences, nor can it be translated into an evolutionary process. There is no such thing as pure matter in the entire universe.

Forms may be with or without a self or soul. The ensouled forms have been called *jivas*. In and through them the conscious luminous spirit, a spark of the Divine Flame, gains vital expression. While *jivas* have been divided into four broad categories (*khanis*)—egg-born, womb-born, earth-born and sweat-born—references are also made to the gods, ghosts and the like. Guru Nanak says, "Innumerable are the categories of creation in various colours and forms." Creation cannot be limited to any fixed number of categories.

The Gurus have given vivid accounts of the visible and invisible worlds. They refer to countless kinds of creation. They speak of innumerable mountains, oceans, countries, continents, galaxies and universes. Guru Nanak's composition "*Japu*" which is considered to be the epitome of the entire Sikh philosophy, gives a highly imaginative account of the gross and subtle worlds in the stanzas known as "*khands*" (regions). Metaphorical references to the three worlds (*tribhavan*), the nine divisions (*nav khand*), the fourteen regions (*chaudah bhavan* or *lok*) of Hindu and Muslim belief are also referred to, but the Gurus repeatedly say that like the Lord, His creation is also limitless. Says the Guru, "Without limit is creation, without measure. Millions long to find the limit, but limitless is creation." Again, "Countless are the atmospheres, waters and fires; countless the clouds, the moons and the suns, infinite are the spheres, infinite the space." The Gurus believe that there are many solar systems like that of ours and each solar system has its own Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa (gods of creation, sustenance and dissolution). So great is the lord and so boundless in His creation that countless planets and worlds are being created and dissolved in it in the twinkling of an eye.

Time and space are two very significant factors in the process of creation. The whole creation is under their influence and sway. It is, therefore, subject to growth and decay. Only the Creator, the Transcendental One, is beyond the influence of time and space. Guru Nanak calls Him *akal murati*, "you transcend time, time has no effect on you—*tu akal purakhu nahi siri kala*" (GG, 1038). In fact time and space exist only as part of the creation. Not only is creation in time and space, it can only be understood in relation to them. When creation itself dissolves at the time of *pralaya* (dissolution), time

and space also merge into Eternity. Therefore, the Gurus do not accept the independent existence of time and space.

Time has been dealt with in Sikh teaching in detail. While the Creator has been called Akal (Timeless), which is a central concept in the Sikh philosophical thought, the universe is governed by the element of time. There is a continuing process of creation and dissolution. Says Guru Arjan in *Sukhmani*: *Kai bar pasario pasar*, *sada sada iku ekankar*—

Numerous times has the visible Universal expanse been manifested;

Only the Supreme Being is eternal, (GG, 276)

In Gurbani, temporality and eternity are constant opposites. Time itself is immeasurable, beyond human conception. During it the universe has appeared and disappeared through endless ages. In Raga Maru Solahe, by Guru Nanak (GG, 1035), occurs a long disquisition on the process of creation. "Through millions of years was there utter darkness enveloping the space; everything was at standstill. Then He by His will created the universe, the continents, regions, and the nether worlds. And the unmanifest made himself manifest."

Sikh cosmology maintains the fourfold division of time. Time is divisible into four *yugas*. The computation of time is in accordance with the Bikrami era, which precedes the Christian era by 57 years. Occasionally the *kali yuga* era too is mentioned. In the sum, for most practical purposes the prevalent Indian computation of time has been adopted.

The Gurus regard man as the crown of creation. Unique is the structure of his body which is "the temple of the living God—*hari mandaru ehu sariru hai*. . . ." (GG,

1346). It is in this worthy temple that the Creator is to be realized and worshipped. Guru Amar Das says:

> In the body are contained,
>
> Pearls and treasures,
>
> The storehouse of devotion.
>
> The nine regions of the earth,
>
> Shops and markets
>
> And the nine treasures of *nam*, the divine
>
> Are contained in this frame. (GG, 754)

The human body is the model of the whole creation, We, each one of us, are the complete universe. Man is the microcosm of the cosmos which is the macrocosm. The study of this macrocosm can reveal all the secrets contained in the macrocosm. Our body is the epitome of all creation and we have only to turn within to seek the truth. There is a complete parallel system between the physical processes of the universe and the biological processes in the body of man. Above and beyond the nine visible 'gates' (eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and the two lower apertures) of the body there lies the invisible "tenth door" (*dasam duar*) where the true *sabda*, in all its resplendent glory and bliss, keeps ceaselessly resounding. This unstruck music (*akhand sabad*), the stream of perennial life, the true Nectar is incessantly in operation in the "tenth door" from where man can travel back to his true Home (*sach khand*) on the ship of the Word (*sabda*). He can then merge his individual self in the universal self to obtain lasting release from the cycle of birth and death. In fact, the human body is a precious gift, the golden opportunity which the great Lord mercifully grants to creation so that it may realize its true self and

become one with the transcendent. To utilize the body for this purpose is the real goal and end of life, and the only justification for man's sojourn in this world.

The concept of cosmology advanced by the Gurus is not merely theological or speculative. It is the outcome of their own spiritual and mystical experience. The Gurus were unmatched spiritual teachers who in their own spiritual ascent beheld the splendid vision of the entire creation. They described what they themselves saw vividly revealed within (GG, 894). Their personal mystical experience is the real base and authority of their revelation. They established a living communion with God and possessed first-hand experience of all the secrets of creation. However, in their humility the Gurus time and again have proclaimed that the mystery of creation is known to the Creator alone. Unlike those creeds which have set dates for the origin of creation, the Gurus have visioned it as wrapped in the mystery and infinity of the Creator. As stated in the *Japu*, none can claim knowledge of this mystery which the Creator alone beholds.

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G. S. B.

SIKHISM (**G. S. Talib**), the youngest of the major world religions, strictly monotheistic in its fundamental belief, was born in the Punjab in the revelation of Guru Nanak (1469-1539). Although it bears close affinities in its terminology and in some of its philosophical assumptions with other India-born religions and with Islam, yet in its orientation it is a separate, independent faith. The distinctive nature of Sikhism has been asserted right from its origin in the pronouncements of Guru Nanak, not set down as a systematic treatise but scattered throughout his numerous hymns included in the Guru Granth Sahib, amplified by the lives and works of his nine successors and explained in the exegetical writings of Sikh scholars dating back to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Again, Sikhism is not only a philosophical system but is also a distinct cultural pattern, a way of life signified by the term Sikh Panth.

Etymologically, the word sikh goes back to Sanskrit *sisya*, itself derived from the root *sis* or *sas* meaning to correct, chastise, punish; to teach, instruct, inform. In Pali *sisya*, (a pupil, scholar, disciple) became *sissa* and later, *sekh* or *sekkha* which means a pupil or one under training in a religious doctrine (Sanskrit siksha and Pali sikkha). In Punjabi the term is *sikkh* usually transliterated *sikh*. “Sikh” now almost universally denotes a follower of Guru Nanak, his nine successors and their teachings embodied in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Scripture. “Sikhism” denominates the faith they profess. Scattered all over the globe, the Sikhs are mostly concentrated in the northwestern part of India. According to 1991 census, of the 17 million Sikhs in India over 85 per cent live in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh which till 1966 comprised a single state called Punjab. In the present state of Punjab where they number 10.2, million, they form 62.95 per cent of the population.

The first date in Sikhism is 1469, the year in which the founder of the faith, Guru Nanak, was born. According to Janam Sakhis, traditional accounts of his life, he from early childhood possessed a reflective mind and liked the company of holy men of different denominations. He was already a married man and a father of two sons, when, towards the close of the fifteenth century, he had a direct mystic encounter with the Supreme Reality, which he called *Nirankar*, the Formless One He then set out to preach the Word, *Sabda*, revealed to him.

According to Guru Nanak, God is One, a single Supreme Reality. He is the creator, preserver, destroyer and recreator of material existence, but He Himself is uncreated, unborn and self-existent. In fact the Creator is not different from His creation but is one with it. All material existence emanates from Him and is the manifestation of His Self. Its apparent diversity does not alter the unicity of the All-embracing whole. God as the supreme spirit permeates throughout His creation but is not limited by it: He transcends it. He, the timeless and the boundless One, transcends even time and space.

In the Sikh Scripture, the concept of the supreme reality is not only dynamic and reverberating but many pluralities such as *nirguna-saguna* and transcendent immanent are subsumed in it. He is *nirguna* or without attributes. Yet He is *saguna* or with attributes, too, because in the manifested state all attributes are His. At the same time the ultimate reality of God never binds Himself to any specific forms of image. Sikhism clearly rejects *avatarvad* or belief in divine incarnation and idol-worship.

God was a palpable reality for the Gurus. They were so imbued with divine love that they never imagined there could be any doubt about His existence. It is true, though that as an infinitesimal part man can never know the Whole. The supreme reality in its

totality is unknowable. Guru Nanak in his long hymn, Japu, which forms early morning prayer for the Sikhs, says: "*je hau jana akha nahi kahana kathanu na jai*—Even if I knew, I could not describe (because He) is indescribable" (GG, 2). Elsewhere using a poetic image he elaborates: "You are the All-knowing, All-seeing Ocean; how can 1, a (humble) fish measure (your) immenseness? —(*tu dariau dana bina mai machhuli kaise antu laha*" (GG, 25). Yet the individual self, being a tiny ray of the illimitable source of light that God is, is ever connected to that source and may feel and even comprehend its existence, however vaguely. The Gurus have often used the image of the sun and the ray to define the relation of God and individual self. They accepted the universal term *atma* or soul as the spark or ray through which the *paramatma* or the Ultimate Spirit permeates individual selves. To comprehend the latter, the former is to be awakened and ignited. This to be done through self-effort under the guidance of the Guru but, above all, with God's grace, *nadar*, *mihar* or *karam*. Knowing God is meeting God, becoming one with Him, merging of the individual soul *atma* in the supreme spirit, *paramatma*, realization of God is a spiritual experience. It is a revelation which comes through intuition and divine grace. Logic or any other kind of reasoning is of no avail here, for against one kind of reasoning another can be advanced. Hence for the seeker is to try in a spirit of humility in prayer, and devotion, and in meditating upon *nam*, the divine name, or *sabda*, the Divine Word. For such effort, Sikhism does not favour asceticism or renunciation. It preaches humility, prayer, devotion and meditation to be cultivated and practised within the worldly life of a householder. Renunciation or rejection of the world as false would be to falsify God's handiwork.

The material world of time and space is God's creation. It is as real as the creator Himself. As says Guru Arjan, Nanak V: "True is He and true is His creation (because) all has emanated from God Himself—*api sati kia sabhu sati; tisu prabh te sagali utpati*" (GG, 294). In Sikhism, why, when and how of universe is not considered a matter for logic and reasoning nor of historical and scientific research. God creates it when he pleases and he destroys when he so wills. To quote Guru Arjan again "*karate ki miti na janai kia, nanak jo tisu bhavai so vartia*—The created cannot have a measure of the creator; What He wills, O Nanak, happens" (GG, 285). Again "*apan khelu api kari dekhai, khelu sankochai tau nanak ekai*—He watches His own sport; when, O Nanak, He winds up His sport, He the one, alone remains" (GG, 292). Guru Gobind Singh calls this process of expansion and reversion or dissolution as *udkarkh* (Sanskrit *utkarsana*) and *akarkh* (Sanskrit *akarsana*), respectively. "When you, O Creator, caused *utkarkh*" he says, "the creation assumed the boundless body; whenever you effect *akarkh*, all corporeal existence merges in you ("Benati Chaupai"). As to the time of the creation of the Universe, Guru "*thiti varu na jogi janai ruti mahu na koi ja karta sirathi kau saje ape janai soi*—(of creation) no yogi knows the date or day, none knows the season or month; the Creator alone who made the Universe knows" (GG, 4). Elsewhere, Guru Nanak in a 16-stanza verse describes his vision of the Pre-Creation state thus: "For countless eons there was a state of semi-darkness. There was no earth or sky but only the boundless *hukam*. There was neither day nor night, no moon nor sun. He was in a *sunn samadhi* (Sanskrit *sunya samadhi*) or trance in nothingness. There were neither any sources of production, nor language, air; nor water. Neither were the processes of creation and dissolution, nor transmigration of souls. There were no upper or nether regions, nor the

seven oceans, or rivers, nor water flowing in them. . (and so on). He was all by Himself (until) when it pleased Him, He created the Universe which he sustains without any prop. . ." And he concludes, "The perfect Guru makes one understand. None knows His bounds. Those blessed ones, O Nanak, who are imbued with the love of the true one enjoy the bliss and sing his praises" (GG, 1035).

The created world is not *maya* or illusion. It is not only real; it is sacred because in Guru Angad's words, "*ih jag sachai ki hai kothari sache ka vichi vasu*—This world is the abode of true one who is present in it" (GG, 463).

Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, identifies it with God Himself: "This (so-called) poisonous world that you see," says he, "is (the manifest) form of God; it is his form that you see" (GG, 922). Elsewhere, however, the world is described as false and likened to an illusion, dream or bubble. The seeming contradiction is resolved by considering the word *sat* (Sanskrit *satya*) or true in its double nuance. *Sat* means true, real, actual, verifiable, genuine: not counterfeit, spurious or imaginary; it also means constant, sure, secure, steadfast, not subject to variation. The material or created world meets the former set of characteristics, but not the latter. It is true in so far as it is not imaginary or illusory, and is in fact a reflection of the supreme spirit. So are the souls which are nothing but the microcosmic bits of the Macrocosmic Spirit transcending even the macrocosm. But the bodies, the abodes of these bits of the True One, are transitory, changeable and ever-changing. It is in this sense that Guru Nanak, in a hymn declaring the world, its dwellers, its wealth, and human relations as false, laments: *kisu nali kichai dosti sabh jagu chalanhar*—whom to befriend? The whole world is in flux" (GG, 468). Elsewhere in the Sikh Scripture, the world is described as falsehood, illusion, dream, bubbles, a wall of

sand, destructible. Thus, according to Sikhism, the world may be considered as a dialectical truth lying between the Absolute Truth and the Buddhist-Sankaracharyan *maya*.

The world came into being through God's Will and is ever subject to His *hukam*, a Persian term meaning command, decree, verdict, order, fiat, rule, law, control, direction; authority, jurisdiction, etc. *Hukam* as a concept in Guru Nanak's message is both Divine Will and Divine Law. In fact, Divine Law has its origin in Divine Will, and the sanction behind it *bhai* or *bhau* Sanskrit *bhaya*), the fear or awe of God. According to Guru Nanak, the whole creation is under *bhau*, fear of God (GG, 464). Other terms used synonymously with *hukam* are *amar* and *farman* (Divine fiat or command); *bhana* and *raza* (divine pleasure) and *qudarat* (divine power). But God, unlike God in some Semitic religions, is no *jabbar* (tyrant, oppressor) or *gahhar* (wrathful, avenger), and *hukam* is not a blind impulse of the supreme spirit; it is regulated by order and justice. The universe being the play of his pleasure, God enjoys it. He, of course, dispenses divine justice but it is tampered by his *mihar* (mercy) and *nadar* (grace). God in relation to his creation is benign and compassionate.

God's creation does not exist in a lump. "The indestructible lord, *ekankar* (the one God) has spread himself in several ways, in several forms, several colours and several garbs" (GG, 284). He is immanent in all these diverse beings, in that *atma*, the divine spirit, pervades through all. Of these the sentient beings, *jvas*, are endowed with individual souls, *jivatma*. *Jiva*, *jiu* and *jio* are the terms used in the Sikh Scripture both for an individual being and for the soul while *jia* signifies both the individual being and *man* or mind. *Jiva* takes birth under God's *hukam* through the fusion of the formless soul

with some material form or body. While the former; being a part of the supreme spirit, *paramatma*, is immortal, the latter, conditioned by time and space, is transient and temporary, and is liable to laws of growth, decay and death. *Jiva* dies when *jivatma* or individual soul sheds its elemental body. Death like birth is also subject to *hukam*, God's will. *Hukam* prevails even between birth and death, but there it operates primarily in the form of *karma*, the divine law of cause and effect.

Sikhism accepts the laws of *karma* and transmigration of soul, but according to it heaven and hell have only symbolic significance. The term *karam*, as it is spelt in Punjabi and as it appears in Sikh Scripture, has three connotations. As an inflection of Sanskrit *karman* from root *kri* (to do, perform, accomplish, make, cause, effect, etc.) it means an act, action, deed, etc. It also stands for fate, destiny, predestination inasmuch as these result from one's actions and deeds. Thirdly, as a word of Arabic origin, *karam* is a synonym of *nadar*, that is divine grace, kindness, clemency. Under the law of *karma*, popular in several eastern religions, *jivatma* on leaving one body transmigrates to another body to take birth as another *jiva* which may belong to any one of the 8,400,000 species that exist. Whether the new body shall belong to a species higher or lower than the one lately cast off by the *jivatma* depends upon the good or bad deeds, respectively, performed during the previous birth or births. It is as result of good actions performed during successive births especially during human births, that, subject to *nadar* or God's grace, a *jivatma* attains *mokh* (Sanskrit *moksa*), that is final liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. *Jivatma*, a mere drop, then merges finally with the Unfathomable Ocean that is *paramatma* or God, and becomes undistinguishable from Him. But as long

as such merger does not come about, the soul must wander enveloped in gross matter through various bodies and different species that form the cycle of transmigration.

Of all the species, human is the highest and the most privileged. Guru Arjan says, "*lakh chaurasih joni sabai, manas kau prabhi dii vadiai*. Of all the eighty-four lacs of species, God gave superiority to man" (GG, 1075); and "*avar joni teri panihari, isu dharti mahi teri sikdari*—All other species are your (man's) water-bearers; you have hegemony over this earth" (GG, 374). Man's superiority arises from his superior intelligence, keener understanding, self-knowledge and a fine moral instinct. Human birth is, therefore, the most appropriate for trying to attain *moksa* or *mukti*. It is a rare chance for *Jivatma* to seek union with *paramatma*. To quote Guru Arjan again, "*bhai parapati manukh dehuria*; *gobind milan ki ih teri baria*—(now that) you have got a human body, this is your turn to meet God" (GG, 378). Guru Nanak himself had warned: "Listen, listen to my advice, O my mind; only good deeds will endure, and there may not be a second chance—*suni suni sikh hamari*; *sukritu kita rahasi mere jiare bahuri na avai vari*" (GG, 154).

According to Guru Nanak, *mukti* or attainment of union with God is the ultimate purpose of man. In human mind, endowed with superior cognitive, affective and conative faculties, the spiritual spark shines the brightest. But *haumai*, or egoism, the sense of "I–amness" bedims the divine spark within him and hampers his understanding of the primal reality. *Haumai* or self-concern creates a wall around man's understanding, separates him from his original source and leads him to *agian* (spiritual blindness, nescience). *Haumai* gives rise to the five passions, i.e. *kam* (sensuality), *krodh* (anger), *lobh* (avarice), *moh* (attachment), and *hankar* (pride). Led by these passions, he becomes

manmukh, a self-centred, self-willed, unregenerate individual, unresponsive to instruction. His salvation lies in overcoming his *haumai* and understanding his true self, which is a spark of the light eternal. "Recognize yourself, O mind," says Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, "You are the light manifest." And he goes on in the same verse to show the way: "Rejoice in Guru's instruction that God is (always) with (in) you. If you recognize your Self, you shall know Lord and shall get the knowledge of life and death" (GG, 441). The seeker is advised to follow *gurmati*, Guru's instruction, and be a *gurmukh*, Guru-oriented, rather than a *manmukh*. Guru in Sikhism means, besides God Himself, the ten Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak (1469-1539) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) and, after them, their *shabad* (Sanskrit *sabda*) preserved in the form of Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs. *Gurmati*, therefore, means tenets and doctrines of the faith as revealed in the Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru is the voice of God and Guru's *shabad* is his divine self-expression.

According to *gurmati*, the means to overcome *haumai* lies in understanding *hukam*, the fundamental principle of God's activity, and in living one's life wholly in accord with it. This understanding or *gian* (Sanskrit *jnan*) comes not through rites and rituals, nor through the study of voluminous tomes or discursive discussions. It is not attained through renunciation, austerities and penances, either. Sikhism recommends *grihastha* or normal life of a householder, but without falling in love with worldly life as if it would always endure. The only true love is devotion to God. Guru Nanak set forth devout love as the truest virtue. Love of God consists in immersing oneself in *nam simaran*, i.e. constant and loving remembrance of His Name, meditating upon His immeasurable immenseness in awe and wonder, and in singing His praises. Such loving

devotion helps one to free oneself from *haumai* and to attain *mokhduar* or threshold of *mukti*, i.e. liberation from the circuit of birth, death and rebirth. At the same time as a householder one should earn one's living by *kirat karni*, i.e. by hard work and honest means. The third virtue is *vand chhakna*, to share one's victuals with others. Besides these Guru Nanak laid special emphasis on *seva* or self-abnegating deeds of service. "One who performs selfless service," says Nanak V, "finds the Lord" (GG, 286). *Shil* (good conduct), *sangam* (moderation), *santokh* (contentment) and *garibi* (in the sense of humility, not of poverty) are the individual virtues a Sikh is instructed to cherish.

On the social plane, Guru Nanak preached equality of all human beings. He especially denounced distinctions and discriminations based on caste, creed, sex and worldly possessions. Humanism, universalism tolerance and *seva* are the pillars of social ethics of the Sikhs.

The founder of the faith, Guru Nanak, not only determined the principal truths and doctrines of Sikhism; he also took care to ensure that his teaching would endure. Wherever he went he advised his followers to join together in *sangat*, i.e. holy fellowship or community, to establish *dharamsals* or houses of congregation, and langar or community refectory (for themselves and for the needy). At the end of his *udasis* or travels, he himself had such a community established at Kartarpur on the right bank of Ravi. It was not a monastic order, but a fellowship of ordinary people engaged in ordinary occupations of life, congregating for prayer and sitting together to share a common repast, overruling distinctions of caste and creed. To carry on his work he himself nominated a successor, a devout Sikh Bhai Lahina, who he renamed Angad, a limb of his own body, and to whom he passed on a book containing his teachings, and his

own light, transmitted further from one to the next succeeding Guru so that, the Sikhs believe, all the ten Gurus were of equal spiritual rank sharing the revelation of Guru Nanak, whose message they elaborated and preached and whose social institutions of *sangat* and *pangat* they expanded and consolidated into a well-defined community of believers which ultimately blossomed into the Sikh Panth.

Guru Angad (1504-52) popularized the Gurmukhi script among Sikhs, and Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) introduced a well-knit ecclesiastical system based on *manjis* or dioceses and organized regular congregational fairs for the Sikhs at Goindval, which became their special centre of pilgrimage. Guru Ram Das (1534-81) established yet another centre by founding the town of Amritsar, now the religious capital of the Sikhs. Under Guru Arjan (1563-1606) Sikhism was more firmly established. He constructed in the middle of the pool of Amritsar, the Harimandar, Golden Temple of today. He also founded new towns of Tarn Taran, Kartarpur and Sri Hargobindpur, and further consolidated the *manji* system by appointing *masands* to the outlying preaching districts.

More significant was his collection and canonization of the compositions of the Gurus and some other saints in the form of the Adi Granth, which he installed in the Harimandar. The provision of a central place of worship and the Scripture proved to be of great significance in moulding Sikh self-consciousness and in the reification of Sikh life and society. Sikhs were now a community distinct enough to attract the spite of the heir-apparent to the throne of Delhi who, soon after his accession as Emperor Jahangir in 1605, had Guru Arjan executed. Guru Arjan's martyrdom, the first in the eventful history of Sikhism, gave a martial turn to the community's orientation. His son and successor, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), instead of donning the rosary and other saintly emblems,

wore a warrior's equipment for the ceremonies of succession and encouraged his followers to train as soldiers. He set the principle of *miri* and *piri*, combination of worldly strength with spiritual faith; and devotion or, to use modern terminology, coalescence of religion and politics. Not that the earlier Gurus had been oblivious of the political happenings around them. The fusion of the worldly and the other-worldly was inherent in the basic teachings of Guru Nanak. The Gurus preached active participation in life rather than running away from it. What Guru Hargobind did was to consciously prepare the community to defend the faith against wilful oppression of bigoted state power. His task was made easier by the awakening brought about by the teaching of his predecessors. He was able to forge the instruments of a mighty revolution which he duly tested in his lifetime. His successors, Guru Har Rai (1630-61) and Guru Har Krishan (1656-64) kept the style he had introduced and were attended by armed followers. But although summoned to imperial presence, they were left in comparative peace by the ruling power. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75), the ninth Guru, again bore the cross. He laid down his life to defend the people's right to their religious belief. His son, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), created the martial order of the Khalsa, a classless commonwealth of self-abnegating Sikhs, now surnamed Singhs, devout and peaceful worshippers of the One God but irreconcilable opponents of injustice and tyranny.

Seva or selfless service had always been a laudable ideal for the Sikhs. It implied some measure of sacrifice. With the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, sacrifice even in its most difficult form, sacrificing one's life for a worthy cause, became a desirable goal for them. To die fighting in defence of righteousness was something to be sought after. "Grant me this boon, O Lord," sang Guru Gobind Singh, "that I may not turn away from good

deeds: may I not be afraid to fight the enemy (of faith) and may I assure my victory: may I instruct my own mind to greedily sing Thy praises; and when the end comes, may I fall fighting in the thick of the battle."

Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikh *sangat* into Khalsa *panth*, giving it a distinct identity in form as well as in spirit. Before he passed away, he put an end to personal guruship and bequeathed the spiritual leadership of the community to the Holy Book, Guru Granth Sahib, in perpetuity and the temporal leadership to the Panth itself who was to fashion its own destiny in future under the guidance of the Guru Granth Sahib, the perpetual repository of fundamental principles, spiritual and moral, as revealed by Guru Nanak in ten corporeal frames. Within half a century of Guru Gobind Singh's decease, Sikhism had turned into a political force and in another forty years it had become a state. In the process the Panth had to undergo the worst state persecution and genocide in human history, but the courage, tenacity and faith with which it reacted to and overcame the suppression was equally unprecedented. The ultimate emergence of Sikhs as the ruling power in northwestern India, however, was accompanied by some loss on the doctrinal side. The Sikh doctrine is not a single reasoned statement but lies scattered in the Scriptural verses and in traditional institutions of the Panth. The preservation of doctrinal purity, therefore, largely depends on correct interpretation of Scripture and tradition. Unfortunately during the turbulent eighteenth century, while the Khalsa were fully involved in the grim struggle for existence and, later, in conquest and political administration, theological affairs fell almost completely in the hands of Udasi and Nirmala priests highly influenced by Hindu scholasticism. They brought in priesthood, ritualism and at places even idol-worship, all strictly forbidden in Sikhism.

The rise of aristocracy and later of monarchy, on the other hand, put an end to such democratic, republican institutions as Sarbatt Khalsa, *gurmata* and Dal Khalsa.

After the conquest of the Punjab by the British, there was a sharp fall in the Sikh population. Two early attempts for the preservation of doctrinal purity were the Nirankari movement of Baba Dyal (1783-1855) and the Namdhari movement under Baba Ram Singh (1815-85). The real renaissance commenced with the Singh Sabha movement launched in 1873. It touched Sikhism to its very roots and made it a living force once again with a renewed search for separate Sikh identity. It opened for the Sikhs doors of modern progress, and ushered in a period of vigorous educational and literary activity. The Singh Sabha gave place to Gurdwara Reform movement of the early 1920's which resulted in the removal of the influence of the priestly class and the establishment of a democratically elected statutory body, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, to look after the religious affairs of the Panth and the management of Sikh shrines. For political leadership, bulk of the Sikh population looked up to the Shiromani Akali Dal. At the national level, their commitment to the cause of Indian freedom was total and their contribution to it was noteworthy.

In 1940, the Muslims of India represented by the Indian Muslim League made a bid to have a separate country of their own, Pakistan, comprising predominantly Muslim territories culled out of India. The Sikhs were both alarmed and motivated. The Punjab, which to them was their only home, was a Muslim majority province. Its transfer to Pakistan would greatly jeopardize their interests, and threaten their newly re-discovered identity. They made a bid for an independent homeland of their own, but they were too few in numbers (1.47 per cent of the total population of India and 13 per cent of that of

the Punjab according to the 1941 census) and too thinly spread to justify their claim to a viable territorial unit.

The partition of the Punjab in 1947, which divided the Sikh population into two almost equal halves, was a severe blow to them. Those left in districts assigned to Pakistan had to migrate to the Indian side of the Punjab and the Sikh states of cis-Sutlej region. But by their native tenacity and enterprise, they soon rehabilitated themselves in independent India. Yet fresh doubts and misgivings soon arose about the preservation of their jealously-guarded identity and cultural heritage. The framers of the new Constitution of India declined to grant to them special rights as a minority community, and a bulk of the non-Sikh Punjabis disowned Punjabi as their mother tongue, with the result that while the whole of India was reorganized on linguistic basis, the Sikhs had to launch a prolonged struggle to secure a Punjabi-speaking state. Language being one of the most important factors of any culture, the Sikhs are highly sensitive about it.

On the theological plane, modern Sikhism is a continuation of the Singh Sabha restoration. While it retains its creedal unity and its adherence to its original metaphysics and symbolism, it has found enough resilience in the framework it has inherited to adapt itself to the modern course of progress without compromising on the fundamentals. Deeply conscious of its eventful history, its outlook is essentially forward-looking. Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Scripture, is the continuing spiritual authority and is venerated as the living presence of the Gurus. It gives form and meaning to the Sikhs' religious style and social customs. It is the integral focus of their psyche and the regulative principle of their belief and practice. Through their sacred book and through their 500-year old history, they maintain a strong attachment to their religious inheritance. Yet their deep

allegiance to it creates no exclusivism. Their faith has a broad humanitarian base. Singly in their homes and collectively in congregations in their places of worship, the Sikhs conclude their morning and evening prayers, or prayers said at any other time as part of personal piety or of a ceremony, with *ardas* or supplicatory prayer which ends with the words: *Nanak nam charhdi kala tere bhane sarbatt ka bhala*—May Thy Name, Thy Glory be forever triumphant, Nanak, and in Thy Will, may peace and prosperity come to one and all.

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G. S. T.

SIKHISM AND CASTE SYSTEM (**Jagjit Singh Chandigarh**). A total rejection of the caste system is a typical feature of the Sikh tradition. Sikhism in fact originated as a voice of protest against the many prevalent ills of contemporary Indian society. The caste system was the most damaging and debilitating of them. It completely negated the humanitarian and egalitarian principles, fundamental to the Sikh creed. Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, and his nine spiritual successors strongly attacked the system. The advent of Sikhism in the midst of caste rigidities and superstitions was truly a radical beginning.

Caste, lexically defined as "a hereditary social group comprising persons of the same ethnic stock, social rank, occupation and more or less distinctive mores" is a characteristic common to all societies the world over, and hardly shows anything more than social differentiations that have developed in varying degrees of discrimination or exclusiveness. In the Punjab, for instance, caste (*jat* or *zat*) signifies only an ethnic group *gotra* (family, line, sept or class) just like the MacDonalds, Montagues, Montmorencies, etc, in England, It is only when it develops into a system with its rigid stratification and permanent division of social status based on birth alone, as it did in India, that caste becomes a curse.

A system is qualitatively different from a casual or unintentional assortment of factors or forces. It is what distinguishes philosophy, religion or science from an unintegrated mass of doctrines and tenets. It is what distinguishes an army from a rabble, as it involves organization, arrangement, method and considered principles of procedure. Above all, a system presumes a direction, a plan, a purpose, an objective towards the fulfilment of which the functioning of the different parts of the system is oriented,

coordinated and harmonized. Moreover, a system has its own cumulative power, thrust, momentum not easy to stem, and grip, hold and shackle almost impossible to unfetter. The caste system that developed in India over the millennia possessed all these ingredients and characteristics. And more, it was given the garb of religion, the *Varnasrma* Dharma, signifying divine origin or sanction for it.

That social distinctions existed, as in other primitive societies, in pre-Aryan India is evidenced by the ruins of the Indus Valley civilization, but whether these were characterized by permanent divisions based on birth we do not know. The caste system in the Hindu society as generally understood definitely developed after the advent of the Aryans. Whether a four-fold division into occupational groups was historical necessity for the invaders is irrelevant here. The fact is that among the sacerdotal groups, the Brahmans, came to possess real power in matters social as well as religious and became, besides being the sole interpreters of religious texts, exclusive authors and arbiters of the social code. They divided society into castes and sub-castes meticulously arranged in a hierarchical social pyramid in which the social grade of each group and individual was fixed permanently by birth. Each layer in the pyramid was superior in caste status (virtually in social status) to all the layers below it, and lower in caste status to all the others above it, irrespective of their political power and economic position. Even the Brahmans at the top of the pyramid and the untouchables at its bottom were graded among their own ranks. The privileges, disabilities, obligations, and duties, i.e. practically all aspects of social behaviour, of each sub-caste by fixed rules and codes were formulated by Brahmans particularly by Manu who claimed direct descent from Brahma, the creator of universe. These sub-castes were, by and large, endogamous groups, and

they worked sedulously to isolate themselves from each other in other social matters too. Mutual exclusiveness was caused predominantly not by social, but by ritualistic factors. Such factors as personal endowments, wealth, political power, colour and racial prejudices, and even taboos, which determined the hierarchical set-ups in other societies, were not the final determinants in the Indian caste system, though these did contribute to its development. Although individuals, groups and sub-castes were in the grip of a continuously downward process, there was practically no upward social mobility.

Caste system of the Varnasrama had its own intricacies. Its constituents were interdependent and interlocked, both horizontally and vertically, in a self-perpetuating social fabric. Within the sub-caste, each constituent of the system (hereditary functionalism, social and ritualistic taboos, pollution, religion, etc.) tied its own caste-knot around the individual.

The fundamental assumption of the caste ideology is that men are not equal, but are forever unequal. Permanent human inequality is the officially declared Brahmanical ideology, and this forms the basis of the Hindu social order. God Himself is the author of this inequality. The Veda was declared by Manu to be the direct revelation of God, and it is a Rig Vedic hymn, *Purusa Sukta*, which forms the source for the caste ideology. It says that God created Brahmans from His head, Ksatriyas from His arms, Vaisyas from His legs and Sudras from His feet. Even the Dharma Sastra of Manu is said to be the inspired word of the Vedas, almost of equal authority with them. Manu did not rest content with establishing the divine authority of the Vedas. His object thereby was to sanctify the caste system and the position of the Brahmans. He declared that the teaching of a Brahman is authoritative for 'man' because the Veda is the foundation for that (Manu, XI. 85).

The process of the creation of a sovereign, autonomous society, the Sikh Panth, had started in the day of Guru Nanak himself. He had begun his career as a teacher of men with the significant utterance, "There is no Hindu, no Mussalman," and took clear-cut practical steps towards moulding a society of Sikhs (literally disciples) on independent ideological lines. He specifically condemned caste and caste ideology as perverse, and rejected the authority of the Vedas and supremacy of the Brahmans. On caste, he said:

> Meaningless is caste and meaningless (caste) names,
>
> The same shadow protects all beings (GG, 83)
>
> What can caste do?
>
> Truthfulness is the criterion (GG, 142).
>
> Discern the light; do not enquire (one's) caste;
>
> There is no caste in the hereafter (GG, 349)
>
> Do not enquire about (one's) caste and birth
>
> Preach the True Sastra
>
> Caste and honour are determined by deeds (GG, 1330).

About high and low caste, he declared:

> There are lower castes among the low castes,
>
> And some are absolutely low:
>
> Nanak seeketh their company,
>
> What hath he to do with the high ones? (GG, 15)

Reading of Vedas he described as a mundane function which Brahmans perform (GG, 791). Elsewhere he says,

Vedas talk about virtue and sin

Or about heaven and hell, nothing else;

But the soul know that

As one soweth, so one reapeth (GG, 1243).

And he castigated Brahmans as "immersed in doubt, they never find the goal, although they call themselves teachers, savants and priests" (GG, 905); and "The Pandit cannot reach (the goal) simply by studying; involved in the duel of sin and virtue he only quenches Death's hunger," (GG, 1012). Other Gurus who succeeded Guru Nanak also spoke and preached in the same vein.

By contradicting Hinduism, Sikhism also delinked itself from that aspect of Hindu *dharma* which was, in day-to-day action, the main vehicle for providing religious sanction to the *varnasrama dharma*. The Gurus issued their own new version of *dharma*, which was, at least as far as caste was concerned, completely at variance with the Hindu mores. They made the Dharma perfect and universal by blending the four castes into one. Underlying the taboos on food and drink and the ostracization of the Sudra castes was the notion of pollution which was supposed to be incurred not only by partaking of food or drinks under certain conditions, but by the mere bodily contact with persons of certain low castes whose traditional occupation, whether actually followed or not, rendered them untouchable. This hymn by Guru Nanak speaks clearly:

If idea of impurity be admitted, there is impurity in everything

There are worms in cow-dung and in wood;

There is no grain of corn without life,

In the first place, there is life in water

By which everything is made green.

How can impurity be avoided?

It enters our very kitchens.

Impurity is not washed away thus, O Nanak;

It is washed by divine knowledge. . .

All impurity supposedly contagious

Consists in superstition. . .

Those who have, through the Guru, understood

Suffer no contamination (GG. 472).

Besides denying the authority of the Vedas and Sastras, the Guru took some practical steps to impart an egalitarian thrust to the nascent Sikh community. The twin institutions of *sangat* (company of the holy) and *pangat* (commensality), where no discrimination on the basis of caste, birth or social status was observed, went a long way in inculcating in the Sikhs the spirit of equality, brotherhood and humanitarianism. The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh was the acme of the Sikh movement. The Khalsa made a clear break with the caste society. Of the five original initiates, the first batch of entrants to the Khalsa Brotherhood, there were three from the so-called Sudra castes, and one Jat, a caste then on the borderline of Vaisyas and Sudras. For initiation into the Khalsa ranks, ritual (*amrit* or *khande di p*ahul) was made obligatory (Guru Gobind Singh himself had to undergo), and during the ceremony the neophytes had to take five vows, viz. *dharm nash*, i.e. to sever connection with one's previous religious belief, *karam nash*, i.e. to free oneself from former rites, rituals, customs, etc.; *kul nash*, i.e. severance of all ties with lineage and birth, the fundamental basis of caste society;

shram nash, i.e. obliteration of stigmas attached to trade or occupation, which gave the convert a sense of self-respect and dignity of labour; and *bharm nash*, i.e. discarding superstition, taboos and notion of pollution. The later Sikh literature of the 18th century (the Rahitnamas, specifically of varied authorship and composed at different times carrying the different emphases) is agreed on the point that the Khalsa broke away categorically from the caste ideology and caste society. Testimony from contemporary non-Sikh sources substantiates this fact and historical evidence supports it. Guru Gobind Singh assigned the overall military command to a former Bairagi assisted by a council of five, selected irrespective of their former castes. Later, of the five divisions of Sikh guerrillas, one was captained by a convert from the so-called untouchable scavenger caste while another was headed by a former Ksatriya. Still later, when with further expansion of the Sikh army, the Dal Khalsa, it was divided into eleven *misls*, one was commanded by a low-caste warrior. Likewise, the overall command vested with one not born to the caste.

Sikhism mounted a frontal attack on citadel of caste and the individual pillars on which it was based. It must, however, be admitted that caste could not be totally uprooted, so strongly was it entrenched in the Indian soil, although it must be emphasized at the same time that the Sikhs never accepted either the religious validity of the caste system or that of its constituent pillars, its authors, interpreters and upholders, the Brahmans. The Sikhs have never owed allegiance to any scripture but Guru Granth Sahib, and it completely and categorically repudiates caste distinctions, ritualism and the Brahmanical ideology of pollution. Nor, since the time of the creation of the Khalsa, Brahmans have ever become a point of reference in the Sikh society in regard to social

status or hierarchy, or for that matter for any purpose whatsoever. There has been no sacerdotal class or caste among the Sikhs, and stress on work ethics has amalgamated the other three castes into a single working class.

Guru Nanak says, "Do not ever bow at the feet of those who claim to be gurus and spiritual guides but go begging at others' doors for subsistence. He has recognized the (true) path, O Nanak! Who earns his living through hard labour and gives something to help others" (GG, 1245). Whatever traces of caste are still discernible among the Sikhs constitute a lingering and fast-dying aberration and not the rule. It must be borne in mind that there is vital distinction between caste and caste system—caste in the ordinary lexical sense and the term caste in the Brahmanical sense. Jatts and Khatris among the Sikhs are in reality occupational classes and not castes as under the Varnasrama Dharma. They do not constitute an hierarchy, because hierarchy presupposes demarcation of higher and lower grades, which are absent from the Sikh society. Distinctions wherever noticed are not ethnic but economic. Jatt Sikhs traditionally forming the peasantry, by and large, continue to stick to land and constitute bulk of the rural segment of population, while Khatri and Arora Sikhs being traditionally engaged in trade and commerce are largely located in urban areas. There is however no bar to occupational mobility.

The only case where some vestiges of the caste system still remain is that of social discrimination against Mazhabi Sikhs (converts from scavenging caste) and Ramdasia Sikhs (formerly Chamars engaged in leather work and weavers). They too have never been treated as untouchable and there has been no commensal or social discrimination against those among them who have taken the *pahul* (the rites) of the Khalsa. Also, there has been no discrimination against anyone while attending religious

gatherings or dining in Guru ka Langar, i.e. community kitchen. The existence of remaining prejudices may be explained by several factors. First, it is a part of the dynamics of ideological mass upsurges that their initial momentum has always tended to taper off as time goes by. After reaching ideological peaks, they have invariably reached a plateau and then slided somewhat back towards the levels they started from. It is due to the limitation of human nature and environmental hurdles that the transformation of human society in terms of its idealistic goals has been extremely slow, despite all religious and other progressive movements that have taken place. Revolutionary movements do leave behind more or less degrees of progress, but the critics usually tend to compare them with absolute standard instead of measuring the achievements in relative terms. It is always easier to point out shortcomings than to appreciate gains. The initial success of the revolutionary Sikh movement, it must be appreciated, attracted to its fold a large number of converts, mostly from the Hindu caste society.

During the tribulations and turmoils of the eighteenth century, the core elements of the Khalsa were deeply involved in a life-and death struggle against the tyranny of the oppressive Indian State and depredations of rapacious invaders, leaving the religious leadership in the hands of Udasis and Nirmala priestly classes whose religious and educational background was more akin to traditional Brahmanism than to orthodox Sikhism. The influence of these classes resulted in diluting the essentially anti-caste teaching of Sikh Gurus so much so that the nineteenth-century Nirankari and Namdhari movements professing to re-establish the purity of Sikh mores ended in gurudom and sectarian exclusiveness.

Intra-caste endogamy is practised only by some Khatri and Arora caste groups. In most cases, and invariably in the case of Jatt Sikhs, marriage is exogamous in relation to sub-caste, though endogamous in relation to class. In India, marriages are not based on pre-marital love, as in the West, and divorce is most difficult to obtain, if not practically impossible, because it carries with it social stigma. Joint family system has been and is still, commonly, the universal mode of life. A girl after marriage has to undergo a tremendous change in family relationships as well as in social environment, and has to make far reaching adjustments in her own behaviour and way of life. Such adjustments become easy if the change from parental home to the in-laws' is minimal, that is if the life-style of the two families is identical or similar. This is easily achieved if the marriage is arranged within the same occupational class which is what caste means among the Sikhs. An alternative custom of marrying within the family, introduced in India by the Semitic tradition, has not been acceptable to Indian culture, which considers marriage between cousins as incestuous. Hence the vogue of treating marriage within *zat* (caste or class) as endogamous, but in relation to *gotra* (sub-caste, sept or clan) as exogamous.

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J. S. C.

SINGH (**Ganda Singh**), from Sanskrit *sinha* for lion, is an essential component of the name for a Sikh male. Every Sikh male name must end with 'Singh'. Historically, this was so ordained by Guru Gobind Singh on the Baisakhi day, 30 March 1699, when he inaugurated the Khalsa, introducing a new form of initiatory rites, *khande di pahul*. The five Sikhs who from among the assembly had on that day offered their heads one after the other responding to the Guru's successive calls were the first Sikhs who were administered by him the vows of the Khalsa. They were to adopt the five prescribed emblems, including *kesa* or unshorn hair and share a common end-name 'Singh' in token of having joined the self-abnegating, martial and casteless fellowship of the Khalsa. After initiation, Daya Ram had become Daya Singh, Dharam Das Dharam Singh, Muhkam Chand Muhkam Singh, Himmat Rai Himmat Singh and Sahib Chand Sahib Singh. Guru Gobind Singh, who had himself initiated at the hands of these five, received the name of Gobind Singh.

Every male Sikh has since carried 'Singh' as part of his name. This was a way of inculcating among the Sikhs a spirit of brotherhood as well as of valour. Wearing the distinctive symbols and clad and armed like a soldier with a flowing beard and a neatly tied turban on his head, a Singh had been set high ideals to live up to. As subsequent events proved, Singhs became a strong cohesive force admired even by their enemies for their qualities of courage and chivalry. For example, Qazi Nur Muhammad, who came in Ahmad Shah Durrani's train during his seventh invasion of India (1764-65), in his poetic account of the campaign in Persian, refers to, the Singhs in rude and imprecatory language, but cannot at the same time help proclaim their many virtues. In section XLI of his poem, he says: "*Singh* is a title (a form of address for them). It is not just to call them

'dogs' (his contumelious term for Singhs). If you do not know the Hindustani language, (I shall tell you that) the word *Singh* means a lion. Truly, they are like lions in battle and, in times of peace, they surpass Hatim (in generosity). . . Leaving aside their mode of fighting, hear ye another point in which they excel all other fighting people. In no case would they slay a coward, nor would they put an obstacle in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the ornaments of a woman. . . They do not make friends with adulterers and housebreakers."

As a rule, all Sikhs other than Sahajdharis are named Singhs even before the formal initiation through *khande di pahul* takes place. While 'Sikh' is a spiritual appellation, 'Singh' has socio-political overtones in addition. In practice all Singhs are Sikhs with the discipline enjoined upon them by Guru Gobind Singh added. In sentiment, however, they are closer to the community as a whole and more active socially and politically. Their special status is recognized legally as well. Under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, and the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1971, while all adult Sikhs are eligible to be registered as voters for election to the respective Gurdwara Parbandhak Committees, only *amritdhari* Sikhs, i.e. Singhs, are qualified for the membership of these statutory bodies. Similarly Sikh *rahit maryada* or code of conduct published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee makes a distinction between *shakhsi rahini* or individual conduct and *panthic rahini* or corporate conduct. While the former applies to all Sikhs, the Singhs must conduct themselves, in addition, according to the *panthic rahini*.

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G. S.

SIROPA (**Major Gurmukh Singh**), a term adopted from Persian *sar-o-pa* (head and foot) or *sarapa* (head to foot) meaning an honorary dress, is used in Sikh vocabulary for a garment, scarf or a length of cloth bestowed on someone as a mark of honour. It is equivalent of *khill'at* or robe of honour with the difference that while a *khill'at* is awarded by a political superior and comprises a whole set of garments with or without arms, a *siropa* is bestowed by a religious or social figure or institution and may comprise a whole dress or, as is usually the case, a single garment or a length of cloth as a mark of recognition of piety or as an acknowledgement of unswerving devotion to a moral or philanthropic purpose.

The use of the term may be traced to certain hymns of the Gurus where the exact words used are *kapra* (garment or cloth), *patola* (scarf) and *sirpau* (*saropa*, dress of honour), and they signify the bestowal of honour as well as protection of honour. For example, Guru Nanak sang, *sachi sifat salah kapra paia*—I received by His grace the garment signalling me to sing His praise (GG, 150). And Guru Arjan said, *prem patola tai sahi dita dhakan ku pati meri*—O Lord, thou hast invested me with the scarf of love to save my honour (GG, 52O). In another hymn he sang, *suni pukar samarth suami bandhan kati savare/pahiri sirpau sevak jan mele nanak pragat pahare*—Responding to my humble plaint the all-powerful Lord has cut asunder all of our shackles. Upon his servants he has conferred robes of honour (GG, 31). Yet in another place: *bhagat jana ka lugara odhi nagan na hoi/ sakat sirpau resmi pahirat pati khoi*—devotees of God are not naked even in torn rag. One who is attached to *maya* loses his honour clad even in his silk robes (GG, 811).

Siropa should be distinguished from the bestowal of a turban or gown by a saint upon a disciple as a mark of initiation or confirmation in an order or of succession to its headship. *Siropa* among the Sikhs is a symbol of honour or benediction. The practice can be traced back at least as far as Guru Angad who bestowed upon (Guru) Amar Das a scarf every year. The latter treated these scarfs as sacred gifts and carried them tied on his head one above the other.

The *siropa* is now a gift bestowed by sangat on behalf of the Guru Granth Sahib upon someone who deserves the honour by virtue of his or her dedication. It is almost invariably in the form of a length of cloth, two to two-and-a-half metres, usually dyed in saffron colour, accompanied by *prasad*, the consecrated food which could be in the form of *karah prasad*, sugar crystal or bubbles, or dry fruit. *Siropa* is the highest award that a Sikh may receive in *sangat*. It is the most precious gift of the Guru made through the *sangat*. The present practice of giving a *siropa* to anyone who makes an offering of or exceeding a certain value or who happens to be socially or politically important is, strictly speaking, an aberration. *Siropa* is earned through high merit and dedication.

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M. G. S.

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB (**Taran Singh**) (Guru = spiritual teacher; Granth = book or volume; Sahib, an honorific signifying master or lord) is the name by which the holy book of the Sikhs is commonly known. It is a voluminous anthology of the sacred verse by six of the ten Gurus whose compositions it carries and of some of the contemporary saints and men of devotion. The book is treated by the followers as Word incarnate, the embodiment and presence manifest or the spirit of the ten historical Gurus (Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh). The anthology was prepared by Guru Arjan (1563-1606), Nanak V. It was in the beginning referred to as *pothi*, *pothi sahib*, the revered book. It was treated with great veneration. The Guru himself described the *pothi* "as God's own repository" (GG, 1226). It was also called the Granth Sahib. The prefix "Guru" came to be applied as Guru Gobind Singh ended, before his passing, the line of personal Gurus. "Granth Sahib" was designated as "Guru Granth Sahib." The Guru had declared the Word to be the same as Guru (GG, 943). Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, had announced that for the sake of liberation, contemplation of the Word was more efficacious than even the sight of the Guru (GG, 594). Over the years, the holy book has received the honours due to the living Gurus. No Sikh assembly can properly speaking be so named unless the holy book be present in it. The holy volume in wraps or without wraps, which is but a rare occurrence, wherever located commands the reverence that was shown the living Gurus. The Holy Book is the centre of all Sikh usage and ceremony.

The Guru Granth Sahib—some of the variations on the title being Adi Granth, Sri Adi Granth or Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib—is today the living Guru for the Sikhs. The basic Word in the expressions listed is *granth* which means a book, Sahib and Sri being honorifics, *guru* indicating its status as successor in the Guruship and *adi*, literally,

original, first or primary, distinguishing it from the other sacred book of the Sikhs, the *Dasam Granth*, the book of the tenth Master, which contains the compositions of the Tenth (Dasam) Guru. A simpler form with a clear rural voice is Darbar Sahib, the holy court. The contributors to the Guru Granth Sahib came from a variety of class and creedal background—there were among them Hindus as also Muslims, "low" castes as also "high" castes.

There were as many different contributors as there were rhymes and rhythms. The entire text was cast in verse patterns of a wide variety. There were 31 different measures used. They were all set in *padas* (verses), *astpadis* (8- stanza hymns) and *chhants* (lyrics usually of 4 stanzas each) and longer compositions such as *vars* in the order of the succession of the authors. In the 1430-page recension which is now the standard form and which carries the statutory approval of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in the present-day Sikh complex the sequence of contents is: the liturgical part (1-13), Siri Raga (14-93), Majh (94-150), Gauri (151-346), Asa (347-488), Gujari (489-526), Devagandhari (527-536), Bihagara (537-556), Vadahansa (557-594), Sorathi (595-659), Dhanasari (660-695), Jaitsari (696-710), Todi (711-718), Bairai (719-720), Tilang (721-727), Suhi (728-794), Bilaval (795-858), Gaund (859-875), Ramkali (876-974), Nat Narain (975-983), Mali Gaura (984-988), Maru (989-1106), Tukhari (1107-1117), Kedara (1118-1124), Bhairau (1125-1167), Basant (1168-1196), Sarang (1197-1253), Malar (1254-1293), Kanara (1294-1318), Kalian (1319-1326), Prabhati (1327-1351), Jaijavanti (1352-1353), Salok Sahaskriti (1353-1360), Gatha, Phuneh and Chaubole (1360-1364), Salok Kabir (1364-1377), Salok Farid (1377-1384), Savaiyye (1385-1409), additional *salok* (1410-1429), Mundavani, and Ragmala (1429-1430).

Even before the time of Guru Arjan, *pothis* or books, in Gurmukhi characters existed containing the holy utterances of the Gurus. A line in Bhai Gurdas, *var* 1.32, suggests that Guru Nanak during his travels carried under his arm a book, evidently comprising his own compositions. According to the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* he handed over such a manuscript to Guru Angad as he passed on the spiritual office to him. Two of the collections of hymns or *pothis* prior to the Guru Granth Sahib are still extant. They are in the possession of the descendants of Guru Amar Das. One of the families in the line used to live in Patiala and has only recently migrated to Pinjore, in the Sivaliks, and the *pothi* it has inherited is on view for the devotees in their home on the morning of the full-moon day every month. A collateral family which is in possession of the second *pothi* lives in the village of Darapur, in Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab.

The *bani,* or word revealed, was held in great veneration by the Sikhs even before the Holy Volume was compiled. It was equated with the Guru himself. "The *bani* is the Guru and the Guru bani," says Guru Ram Das in Raga Nat Narain (GG, 982). The *bani* echoed the Divine Truth; it was the voice of God—"the Lord's own word," as said Guru Nanak in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Amar Das (GG, 515):

vahu, vahu, bani nirankar hai

tis jevad avar na koe

Hail, hail, the word of the Guru, which is the Lord Formless Himself;

There is none other, nothing else to be reckoned equal to it.

The compilation of the Holy Book, a momentous event in Sikh history, is generally described in the briefest terms. The Sacred Volume was prepared by Guru Arjan (1563-1606) and the first copy was calligraphed by Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636) at his

dictation—this is all we learn from most of the sources. What amount of planning, minute attention to detail and diligent and meticulous work it involved is slurred over. An old text which gives some detailed information is the *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi*. Written in 1718, this, in fact, is the oldest source. Although it does not go into the technical and literary minutiae, it broadly describes the process from the beginning of the transcription of the Holy Volume to its installation in the newly-built Harimandar at Amritsar.

Why Guru Arjan undertook the task is variously explained. One commonly accepted assumption is that the codification of the Gurus' compositions into an authorized volume was begun by him with a view to preserving them from garbling by schismatic groups and others. According to the *Mahima Prakash* (1776), he set to work with the announcement: "As the Panth (Community) has been revealed unto the world, so there must be the Granth (Book), too." By accumulating the canon, Guru Arjan wished to affix the seal on the sacred Word. It was also to be the perennial fountain of inspiration and the means of self-perpetuation for the community.

Guru Arjan called Bhai Gurdas to his presence and expressed to him the wish that the sacred verse be collected. Messages were sent to the disciples to gather and transmit to him the hymns of his predecessors.

Baba Mohan, son of Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, had manuscript collections of the Gurus' hymns inherited from his father. Bhai Gurdas travelled to Goindval to bring these *pothis*, but the owner refused to see him. Bhai Buddha, one of the oldest and most revered Sikhs from Guru Nanak's days, was similarly turned away from the door. Then Guru Arjan went himself. He sat in the street below Mohan's attic serenading him on his *tambura*. Mohan was disarmed to hear the hymn. He came downstairs with the *pothis* and

presented these to the Guru. As says the *Gurbilas*, the *pothis* were placed on a palanquin bedecked with precious stones. The Sikhs carried it on their shoulders and Guru Arjan walked behind barefoot. He refused to ride his horse, saying that the *pothis* were the very spirit, the very light of the four Gurus—his predecessors.

The cavalcade broke journey at Khadur Sahib to make obeisance at shrines sacred to Guru Angad. Two *kos* from Amritsar, it was received by Hargobind, Guru Arjan's young son, accompanied by a large number of Sikhs. He bowed at his father's feet and showered petals in front of the *pothis*. Guru Arjan, Hargobind, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Buddha now bore the palanquin on their shoulders and marched towards Amritsar led by musicians, with flutes and drums. Reaching Amritsar, Guru Arjan first went to the Harimandar to offer *karah prasad* in gratefulness.

To quote the *Gurbilas* again, an attractive spot in the thick of a forest on the outskirts of Amritsar was marked out by Guru Arjan. So dense was the foliage that not even a moonbeam could pry into it. It was like Panchbati itself, peaceful and picturesque. A tent was hoisted in this idyllic setting. Here Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas started work on the sacred volume.

The making of the Granth was no easy task. It involved sustained labour and a rigorous intellectual discipline. Selections had to be made from a vast amount of material. Besides the compositions of the four preceding Gurus and of Guru Arjan who himself was a poet with a rare spiritual insight, there were songs and hymns by saints, both Hindu and Muslim. What was genuine had to be sifted from what was counterfeit. Then the selected material had to be assigned to appropriate musical measures and transcribed in a minutely laid out order.

Guru Arjan carried out the work with extraordinary exactness. He arranged the hymns in thirty different *ragas*, or musical patterns. A precise method was followed in setting down the compositions. First came *sabdas* by the Gurus in the order of their succession. Then came *astpadis*, *chhants*, *vars*, and other poetic forms in a set order. The compositions of the Gurus in each raga were followed by those of the Bhaktas in the same format. Gurmukhi was the script used for the transcription.

According to Bhai Gurdas' testimony, the text had been transcribed by Bhadon *vadi* Ekam 1661/1 August 1604. At the head of the index he recorded: "*Sammat 1661 miti bhadon vadi ekam pothi likhi pahuche*, i.e. on Bhadon *vadi* Ekam 1661 he had reached this spot where the index was to begin after completing the writing of the book." The index, giving the opening words of each *sabda* or hymn and pagination, is itself a marvel of scholarly fastidiousness. A genius, unique in spiritual intuition and not unconcerned with methodological design, had created a scripture with an exalted mystical tone and a high degree of organization. It was large in size—nearly 7,000 hymns, comprising compositions of the first five Sikh Gurus and fifteen Bhaktas and Sufis from different parts of India, including Shaikh Farid, Kabir and Ravidas. The Sacred Volume consisted of 974 leaves, or 1948 pages, 12"x 8", with several blank ones at the end of a *raga* where there were not *sabdas* enough to fill the section assigned to it. The site of these marvellous labours is now marked by a shrine called Ramsar.

The completion of the Granth Sahib was, says the *Gurbilas*, celebrated with much jubilation. In thanksgiving, *karah prasad* was prepared in huge quantities. Sikhs came in large numbers to see the Holy Book. They were rejoiced in their hearts by a sight of it and bowed before it to pay homage. Among the visitors was Bhai Banno who had led a

group of Sikhs from Mangat, in western Punjab. Guru Arjan, who knew him as a devoted Sikh, instructed him to go to Lahore and have the Book bound. Banno sought the Guru's permission to be allowed to take the Granth Sahib first to Mangat for the Sikhs there to see it. The Guru allowed this, but enjoined him not to tarry at Mangat, or at any other place, more than a night.

As Banno left Amritsar with his sacred charge, it occurred to him to have a second copy transcribed. The first copy, he argued, would remain with the Guru. There must be an additional one for the *sangat*. The Guru's direction was that he should not stay longer than one night at a place, but he had said nothing about the time to be spent on the journey. So he proceeded with his plans and sent a Sikh to purchase paper. He proposed to his companions that they should travel by easy marches of five miles a day. The time thus saved was utilized in transcribing the holy text. Sikhs wrote with love and devotion and nobody shirked his duty whether it was day or night. By the time they reached Lahore, the second copy was ready. But Banno had added to it some apocryphal texts. He had both volumes bound and returned to Amritsar as fast as he could.

At Amritsar, he was received with due ceremony, though Guru Arjan was not a little surprised to see two volumes instead of one. Bhai Banno spoke truthfully: "Lord, there is nothing that is hidden from you. This second copy I have had made for the sake of the *sangat*." But the Guru accepted only the volume written in Bhai Gurdas hand. He enjoined the Sikhs to own the Granth equal with the Guru and make no distinction between the two. "He who would wish to see the Guru, let him see the Granth. He who would seek the Guru's word, let him read the Granth with love and attention."

Guru Arjan asked the Sikhs where the Granth Sahib be installed. Bhai Buddha spoke, "You are omniscient, Master: But there is no place more suitable than the Harimandar." The Guru was happy to hear these words, "like one who had sighted the new moon." He then recited the praise of the Harimandar: "There is nothing like it in all the three worlds. Harimandar is like the ship—the means for the people to cross over the worldly ocean triumphantly. A new joy pervades here every day. A sight of it annuls all sins."

It was decided to spend the night at Ramsar and return to Amritsar the next morning. The Granth Sahib rested on a seat under the canopy, whereas the Guru and the Sikhs slept on the ground.

A disciple had to be chosen to take charge of the Granth Sahib. As says the *Gurbilas*, Guru Arjan lay awake through the night reflecting on the question. His choice finally fell on Bhai Buddha whose devotion was universally applauded. As they awoke, the Guru and his Sikhs made ablutions in Ramsar. The former thereupon practised his wonted meditation. At dawn, the entire *sangat* marched towards Harimandar. Bhai Buddha carried the Holy Book on his head and Guru Arjan walked behind swinging the fly-whisk over it. Musicians sang *sabdas*. Thus they reached the Harimandar. The Granth Sahib was ceremonially installed in the centre of the inner sanctuary. The date was Bhadon *sudi* 1, 1661 Bk/16 August l604. Bhai Buddha opened it with reverence to obtain from it the divine command, as Guru Arjan stood in attendance behind. The following hymn was read as God's own pronouncement for the occasion:

He Himself has aided his saints in their task,

He Himself has come to see their task accomplished.

Blessed is the earth, blessed the tank;

Blessed is the tank with *amrit*, nectar, filled.

Nectar everfloweth the tank: He has had the task completed;

Eternal is the Perfect Being,

His praises Vedas and Puranas sing.

The Creator has bestowed on me the nine treasures, and all the charisms.

No lack do I suffer now.

Enjoying His largesse, bliss have I attained,

Ever-expanding is the Lord's bounty.

Guru Arjan directed that during daytime the Holy Book should remain in the Harimandar and by night, after the *Sohila* was read, it should be taken to the room he had built for himself in Guru-ka-Mahal. As evening advanced by two watches, Bhai Buddha recited the *Sohila* and made the concluding *ardas* or supplication. The Granth Sahib was closed and wrapped in silks. Bhai Buddha held it on his head and marched towards the chamber indicated by Guru Arjan. The Guru led the *sangat* singing hymns. The Granth Sahib was placed on the appointed seat, and the Guru slept on the ground by its side. Daily in the small hours of the morning as the stars twinkle in the pool below, the Holy Book is taken out in state to the Harimandar and brought by night to rest—now, in a room at the Akal Takht. The practice continues to this day. But the volume is not the same. That original copy was taken to Kartarput when Guru Arjan's successor, Guru Hargobind, left Amritsar in 1634. There it passed into the possession of his grandson, Dhir Mall. It has since remained in that family.

In the Sikh system, the word Guru is used only for the ten prophet-preceptors, Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and for none other. Now this office of Guru is fulfilled by the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sacred Book, which was so apotheosized by the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, before he passed away in 1708. No living person, however holy or revered, can have the title or status of Guru. For Sikhs, Guru is the holy teacher, the prophet under direct commission from God—the Ten who have been and the Guru Granth Sahib which is their continuing visible manifestation.

Guru Gobind Singh manifested the Khalsa in 1699. In 1708, he supplied another Permanent—and final—feature in the evolution of the Sikh faith when he installed the Holy Scripture as Guru. This is how the *Bhatt Vahi Talauda Parganah Jind* describes the event:

> *Guru Gobind Singh mahal dasman beta Guru Tegh Bahadur ka pota Guru Hargobind ji ka parpota Guru Arjan ji ka bans Guru Ram Das ji ki Surajbansi Gosal gotra Sodhi Khatri basi Anandpur parganah Kahlur muqam Nander tat Godavari des dakkhan sammat satran sai painsath kartik mas ki chauth shukla pakkhe budhvar ke dihun Bhai Daya Singh se bachan hoya Sri Granth Sahib lai ao bachan pai Daya Singh Sri Granth Sahib lai aye guru ji ne panch paise narial age bheta rakha matha teka sarbatt sangat se kaha mera hukam hai meri jagah Sri Granthji ko janana jo sikh janega tis ki ghal thaen paegi guru tis ki bahuri karega sat kar manana.*
>
> Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great-grandson of Guru Arjan, of the family

> of Guru Ram Das, Surajbansi Gosal clan, Sodhi Khatri, resident of Anandpur, parganah Kahlur, now at Nanded, on the Godavari bank in the Deccan, asked Bhai Daya Singh, on Wednesday, *shukla chauth* of the month of Kartik, 1765 Bk (6 October I708), to fetch the Sri Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice and a coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the *sangat*, "It is my commandment: Own Sri Granthji in my place. He who so acknowledges it will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth.

According to Giani Garja Singh, who discovered this entry, the author was Narbud Singh Bhatt, who was with Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded at that time.

Bhatt Vahis are a new source of information discovered by Giani Garja Singh (I904-77), a dogged searcher for materials on Sikh history. The Bhatts were hereditary panegyrists, genealogists or family bards. (A group of them were introduced to Guru Arjan by Bhatt Bhikkha, who himself had become a disciple in the time of Guru Amar Das. According to Bhai Gurdas, *Var* XI. 21, and Bhai Mani Singh *Sikhan di Bhagat Mala*, he had earlier visited Guru Arjan with the *sangat* of Sultanpur Lodhi.) Those of them who came into the Sikh fold composed hymns in honour of the Gurus which were entered in the Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan.

These Bhatts also recorded events of the lives of the Gurus and of the members of their families in their scrolls called *vahis*. Some of these *vahis* are preserved to this day in the families, especially at the village of Karsindhu, in Jind district of Haryana. The script in which they are written is called *bhataksri*—a kind of family code like lande and

mahajani. The only known scholar to have worked with these materials was Giani Garja Singh.

Apart from this new testimony culled by Giani Garja Singh from the Bhatt Vahis, another contemporary document which authenticates the fact of Guru Granth Sahib having been invested with the final authority is a letter issued by reference of Guru Gobind Singh's wife, Mata Sundariji. To quote from the original, which is now in the possession of Bhai Chet Singh, of the village of Bhai Rupa, in present-day Bathinda district, to whose ancestors it was addressed:

> *Ik Oankar Wahguru ji ki fateh, Sri Akalpurkh ji ka Khalsa yak rang jina dithia Wahguru ji chit avai. Bhai Sahib Dan Singhji Bhai Duni Singh ji Bhai Jagat Singhji Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh ji Ugar Singhji Bhai Ram Singhji sarbatt Khalsa Wahguru Akalpurkhji ka pase likhtam gulam Khalsa ji ka Kahn Singh Nival Singh Mul Singhji Sujan Singh Gaja Singh Maha Singh Sarbatt Khalsa Wahguru Akalpurkh ka Wahguru ji ki fateh vachani khusha karna ji Wahguru Akalpurkhji har dam chit avai sukh hoe Khalsa ji ka bol bala hoi ardas tusadi marfat Bhai Dulcha Singh ke hath pahuti parhkai Khalsa ji bahut khushwaqat hoya tusadi bab Khalsa ji dayal hoya hai hath jore kai jo rakhya hove. "Jo janu harika sevako hari tiske kami." Guru Guru japna Wahguru ang sang hai fajal karkai rakhia hovegi Khalsaji Bhai Kahn Singhji kau Mata Sahibji ne gumastgiri Amritsar ji ki mukarar kiti hai Khalsa ji ne gurmata karke Harimandar ate bagh di murammat imarat ka kam shuru kita hai sri Mata Sahib ji ne likha hai ki Wahguru Akalpurkh ji ki nagari hai langar jarur karna. . . Khalsa*

Sri Wahguru ji ka suchet bibek budh chahie jo sivai Akalpurkh duje no janai nahi Dasam Patshahian tak jamai paidhe yarvin barvin Banda Chaubanda Ajita vagaire te aitkad lei avana hatiya hai. Hor hatiya Guru japan nal dur hosan, par ih hatiya gunah bakshiaiga nahi jo manmukh ke jame upar aitkad karenge, 'Mukh mohi pheriai mukh mohi juttha hoi.' Khalsaji tusan sivai Akal duje no manana nahi. Sabad dasvin patshaji tak khojna, "Sabad khoji ihu gharu lahai Nanak ta ka dasu. "Guru ka nivas sabad vich hai. "Guru mahi ap samoi sabad vartaiya." "Jian andar jiu sabad hai jit sahu milava hoi." Wahguru ji ki fateh. Bhai Mehar Singh tahlia Bhai Bule ka pattar ke khasmane vich rahina Guru nal gandh paisi.

Ik Oankar Wahiguru ki Fateh.

The Khalsa, of the timeless Himself, immersed in the One, and whose sight brings Wahiguru to mind. Addressed to Bhai Sahib Dan Singhji, Bhai Duni Singhji, Bhai Jagat Singhji, Bhai Gurbakhsh Singhji, Ugar Singhji, Bhai Ram Singhji, the entire Khalsa of Wahiguru, the Timeless One. From the slaves of the Khalsaji, Kahn Singhji, Nival Singh, Mul Singhji, Sujan Singh, Gaja Singh, Maha Singh Wahiguruji ki Fateh to the entire Khalsa. May you be rejoiced in constant remembrance of the Timeless Wahiguru. May prosperity prevail; may supremacy belong to the Khalsa. Having received your missive through Bhai Dulcha Singh, Khalsaji is highly pleased. Khalsaji happily prays with folded hands for your security. "He who to Lord surrenders himself, his affairs the Lord will set to rights." Repeat always the name of Guru. Wahiguru is by your

> side. He will extend to you His grace and protection. Khalsaji, Mata Sahibji has appointed Bhai Kahn Singhji to the superintendence of Amritsarji. The Khalsaji, through a *gurmata*, has taken in hand the construction and repair of the Harimandar and the garden. Sri Mata Sahibji has written that *langar* must be run in that place which is the abode of God Himself. . . . Wahiguru's Khalsa must always be alert, possessed of discriminating wisdom. The Khalsa must believe in none other than the Timeless One. There have been only Ten Masters in human form; to believe in the eleventh and twelfth, Banda Singh Bahadur, Ajita [Ajit Singh, adopted son of Mata Sundariji] etc. is a mortal sin. Every other sin can be had cancelled by repeating the Guru's name, but this sin of believing in human forms will not be remitted. "The faces turned away from the Guru are faces perverted." Khalsaji, you must believe in none other except the Timeless One. Go only to the Ten Gurus in search of the Word. "Nanak is the slave of him who by seeking the Lord's Name obtains his goal." The Guru resides in *sabda*. "The Lord hath merged His own Self in the Guru through whom He has revealed His word." "The Word is the life of all life, for, through it, one experiences God." Victory to the Lord, Bhai Mehar Singh, the messenger, son of Bhai Bula: keep the letter secure in your custody. You will gain the Guru's favour.

From this letter it is clear how the Sikhs after Guru Gobind Singh believed that the Guruship had passed to the *sabda*, i.e. the Word as contained in the Guru Granth Sahib. None in the human form after the ten Gurus was to be acknowledged by the Sikhs

as Guru. Those who, like some of Banda Singh's or Ajit Singh's followers, called their leaders Gurus were committing a mortal sin. All other sins, says the letter, could be had forgiven by repeating the Guru's name, but not the sin of believing in a living Guru after the Ten Masters of the Sikh faith.

Several other old Sikh documents also attest the fact of succession having been passed on by Guru Gobind Singh to the Guru Granth Sahib. For instance, the *Rahitnama* by Bhai Nand Lal, one of Guru Gobind Singh's disciples remembered to this day for his elegant Persian poetry in honour of the Gurus. In his *Rahitnama*, or code of conduct, Bhai Nand Lal, who was at Nanded in the camp of Emperor Bahadur Shah as one of his ministers at the time of Guru Gobind Singh's passing away, thus records his last words in his Punjabi verse:

He who would wish to see the Guru,

Let him come and see the Granth.

He who would wish to speak with him,

Let him read and reflect upon what says the Granth.

He who would wish to hear his word,

He should with all his heart read the Granth, or listen to the Granth being read.

Another of Guru Gobind Singh's disciples and associates, Bhai Prahlad Singh, records in his *Rahitnama*, the Guru's commandment:

By the word of the Timeless One,

Has the Khalsa been manifested.

This is my commandment for all of my Sikhs:

You will acknowledge Granth as the Guru.

In *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (author Kuir Singh; the year of writing 1751), Guru Gobind Singh is quoted as saying:

This is no more the age for a personal Guru to be anointed

I shall not place the mark on anyone's forehead.

All *sangat* is owned as Khalsa now, under the shelter of the Almighty Himself,

They are now to the Word attached.

He who believes is the Sikh par excellence.

******

On the Guru Granth should he put his reliance,

To none else should he direct his adoration.

All his wishes the Guru will bring to fulfilment,

This he should believe,

Casting away all dubiety.

Another authority that may relevantly be quoted is Devaraja Sharma's *Nanakacandrodayamahakavyam*, an old Sanskrit manuscript which has recently been published by Sanskrit University, Varanasi. It records Guru Gobind Singh's proclamation that the Scripture would be the Guru after him. "While the Master lay on his deathbed, Nand Lal (?) came forward and asked the following question: 'Who shall be the object of our discourses?' The Master replied, "The Granth, which itself is the doctrine of the Guru, shall be your teacher. This is what you should see; this is what you should honour; this is what should be the object of your discourses."

This point has been laboured somewhat lengthily for the reason that cavil is sometimes raised. Certain cults among Sikhs still owning personal Gurus ask for

authentic evidence to the effect that Guru Gobind Singh had named Sri Guru Granth Sahib his successor. No archival testimony can be presented, unless the Bhatt Vahi entry be included in that category. But evidence bequeathed through tradition—written as well as oral—supports this fact. This is what has come down through Sikh memory. Had there been the 11th Guru, the name could not have been effaced from the pages of history. Guru Gobind Singh brought to an end the line of personal Gurus and declared the Holy Word Guru after him.

Along with the Guru Granth Sahib, the Khalsa was now the person visible of the Guru. The word khalsa is derived from the Arabic khalis, meaning pure or pious. Guru Gobind Singh used the term in its symbolic and technical sense. In official terminology, Khalsa in Mughal days meant lands or territory directly under the king. Crown-land was known as Khalsa land. As says a contemporary poet, Bhai Gurdas II, Guru Gobind Singh converted the *sangat* into Khalsa. Sikhs were the Guru's Khalsa, i.e. directly his own, without any intermediary or local *sangat* leaders. On that point, we have the evidence of *Sri Gur Sobha* by Sainapat, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Gobind Singh's own *hukamnamas*. To quote from the former:

A day preceding the event, i.e. passing of Guru Gobind Singh

The Sikhs gathered together

And began to ask:

"What body will the lord now take?"

The Guru at that moment spoke:

"In the Khalsa will you see me;

"With the Khalsa is my sole concern;

"My physical form have I bestowed upon the Khalsa."

Guru Gobind Singh, in his *hukamnama* issued on Phagun 4, 1756 Bk/ 1 February 1700, to the *sangat* of Pattan Farid, modern Pakpattan, refers to the *sangat* as 'his own Khalsa." *Hukamnamas* are letters written by the Gurus to *sangats* in different parts of the country. Some of them have been traced in recent years and two collections were published in 1967—one by Dr Ganda Singh (Punjabi University, Patiala) and the second by Shamsher Singh Ashok (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar). Most of the *hukamnamas* are common to both anthologies. These *hukamnamas* are another valuable source of information on the lives of the Gurus and on the Sikh communities forming in farflung places.

That Sri Guru Granth Sahib is Guru Eternal for it has been the understanding and conviction of the Sikh community since the passing of Guru Gobind Singh. In their hard, exilic days soon afterwards when they were outlawed and had to seek the safety of the hills and jungles, the Sikhs' most precious possession which they cherished and defended at the cost of their lives was Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Holy Book was their sole religious reference, and they acknowledged none other. To quote the *Prachin Panth Prakash*: "Thou Guru Granth art the true Presence. Impart to the Sikh *sangat* the true counsel." This is how the Sikhs address Sri Guru Granth Sahib as they assemble at the Akal Takht to seek its guidance before launching an attack on the Pathan citadel of Kasur. In the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who established sovereignty in the name of the Khalsa, personal piety and court ceremonial centred upon the Guru Granth Sahib. As contemporary records testify, Ranjit Singh began his day by making obeisance to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. On festive occasions, he made pilgrimage to Amritsar to bow before

Sri Guru Granth Sahib in the Harimandar. For the Sikhs in general Guru Granth Sahib was the only focus of religious attachment.

None other existed otherwise, either in human form or symbolically. In all Sikh literature after Guru Gobind Singh, the Holy Book is uniformly referred to as *Guru* Granth.

The personal Guruship was ended by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Succession passed to the Guru Granth Sahib in perpetuity. This was a most significant development in the history of the *panth*.

The finality of the Holy Book was a fact rich in religious and social implications. The Guru Granth became Guru and received divine honours. It was acknowledged the medium of the revelation descended through the Gurus. It was for the Sikhs the perpetual authority, spiritual as well as historical. They lived their religion in response to it. Through it, they were able to observe their faith more fully, more vividly. It was central to all that subsequently happened in Sikh life. It was the source of their verbal tradition and it shaped their intellectual and cultural environment. It moulded the Sikh concept of life. From it the community's ideals, institutions and rituals derived their meaning. Its role in guaranteeing the community integration and permanence and in determining the course of its history has been crucial.

The Word enshrined in the Holy Book was always revered by the Gurus as well as by their disciples as of Divine origin. The Guru was the revealer of the Word. One day the Word was to take the place of the Guru. The line of personal Gurus could not have continued forever. The inevitable came to pass when Guru Gobind Singh declared Sri Guru Granth Sahib to be his successor. It was only through the Word that the Guruship

could be made everlasting. This object Guru Gobind Singh intuitively secured when he pronounced Granth Sahib to be Guru after him. The Granth Sahib was henceforth—for all time to come—the Guru for the Sikhs.

Since the day Guru Gobind Singh vested succession in it, the Guru Granth has commanded the same honour and reverence as would be due to the Guru himself. It is the focal point of Sikh devotion. The object of veneration in Sikh *gurdwaras* is Sri Guru Granth Sahib; *gurdwara* is in fact that place of worship wherein Sri Guru Granth Sahib is seated. No images or idols are permitted inside *gurdwara*. The Holy Volume is opened ceremonially in the early hours of the morning after *ardas* or supplication. It must be enthroned, draped in silk or other pieces of clean linen, on a high seat on a pedestal, under a canopy. The congregation takes place in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, with the officiant, who could be anyone from among those present, sitting in attendance, with a *chavar* or whisk in his hand which he keeps swinging over it in veneration. The singing of hymns by a group of musicians will go on. All the time devotees have been coming and bowing low before the Holy Book to pay homage and taking their seats on the ground in front. The officiant or any other learned person who will take his seat behind Sri Guru Granth Sahib will read out a hymn and expound it for the audience. At the end of the service, the audience will stand up in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, with hands folded in front in reverence and one of them leading the *ardas* or prayer. At the end of the evening service the Holy Book will be closed, again after a short prayer, and put to rest for the night. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is similarly kept in some Sikh homes, where a separate room is set apart for it. It is opened in the morning and put to rest in the evening in the same style and manner. Before starting the day's work men and

women will go into the room where Sri Guru Granth Sahib has been ceremonially installed, say a prayer in front of it and open the book at random and read the first hymn which meets the eye to obtain what is called *vak* or the day's lesson or order (*hukam*). Breviaries contain stipulated *banis* from Sri Guru Granth Sahib which constitute the daily offices and prayers of a Sikh.

A very beautiful custom is that of *akhand path* or uninterrupted recital of Sri Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end in a single service. Such a recital must be completed within 48 hours. The entire Guru Granth Sahib, 1430 pages, is read through in a continuous ceremony. This reading must go on day and night, without a moment's intermission. The relay of reciters who take turns at saying Scripture must ensure that no break occurs. As they change place at given intervals, one picks the line from his predecessor's lips and continues. When and how the custom of reciting the canon in its entirety in one continuous service began is not known. Conjecture traces it to the turbulent days of the eighteenth century when persecution had scattered the Sikhs to far-off places. In those uncertain times, the practice of accomplishing a reading of the Holy Book by continuous recital is believed to have originated.

Important days on the Sikh calendar are marked by *akhand paths* in *gurdwaras*. Celebrations and ceremonies in Sikh families centre upon *akhand paths*. The homes are filled with holiness for those two days and nights as Sri Guru Granth Sahib, installed with due ceremony in a room especially cleaned out for the occasion, is being recited. Apart from lending the air sanctity, such readings make available to listeners the entire text. The listeners come as they wish and depart at their will. Thus they keep picking up snatches of the *bani* from different portions at different times. Without such ceremonial recitals,

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, a very large volume, would remain generally inaccessible to the laity except for *banis* which are recited by Sikhs as their daily prayers. In bereavement, families derive comfort from these *paths*. Obsequies in fact conclude with a completed reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and prayers are offered in its presence at the end for the departed soul.

There are variations on *akhand path* as well. A common one is the *saptahik path* wherein the recital of the text is taken in parts and completed within one week. A *sahaj* or slow-reading *path* may continue for a longer time, even for months. In *ati akhand path*, the entire text will be read out by a single individual without any interruption for whatsoever purpose. For these *paths* the Holy Book is recited or intoned, not merely read. This brings out tellingly the poetic quality of the *bani* and its power to move or grip the listener. But it must be heard in silence, sitting on the floor in front of it in a reverent posture.

The *bani* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is all in the spiritual key. It is poetry of pure devotion, lyrical rather than philosophical, moral rather than cerebral. It prescribes no social code, yet Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the basis of Sikh practice as well as of Sikh devotion. It is the living source of authority, the ultimate guide to the spiritual and moral path pointed by the Gurus. Whatever is in harmony with its tenor will be acceptable; whatever not rejectible. Guidance is sought from it on doctrine, on the tenets of the faith.

The Sikh Panth as a whole will resort to Sri Guru Granth Sahib as will the individual in moments of perplexity or crisis. Whether or not to attack Kasur, the Pathan stronghold, to have the abducted wife of a helpless Brahman who had come to the Akal Takht to appeal to the Sikhs for help, was the question before them in the year 1763.

Finally, as records *the Prachin Panth Prakash*, it was decided to obtain the counsel of the Guru Granth Sahib. Instance comes to mind also of the early days of the Gurdwara movement aiming to reform the ritual in Sikh places of worship. On 12 October 1920, a meeting of Sikh backward castes, sponsored by the faculty and students of the Khalsa College at Amritsar, was held in the Jallianvala Bagh. The following morning some of them were taken to the Golden Temple, but the *granthis* in control refused to accept *karah prasad* or sacrament they had brought as an offering and to say the *ardas* on their behalf. There was an outburst of protest against this discrimination towards the so-called low-caste Sikhs, totally contrary to the Sikh teaching. A compromise was at last reached and it was decided that the Guru's direction be sought.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib was, as is the custom, opened at random and the first verse on the page to be read was:

He receives the lowly into grace,

And puts them in the path of righteous service.

The Guru's verdict was clearly in favour of those whom the *granthis* had refused to accept as full members of the *panth*. This was triumph for reformist Sikhs. The *karah prasad* brought was accepted and distributed among the *sangat*.

Singly or in groups, in their homes or in congregations in their places of worship, Sikhs conclude their morning and evening prayer, or prayer said at any other time as part of personal piety or of a ceremony, with a supplication called *ardas*. *Ardas* is followed by the recitation of these verses:

Agya bhai Akal ki tabhi chalayo Panth,

Sabh sikkhan kau hukam hai Guru manio Granth.

Guru Granth ji manio pragat Guran ki dehi.

Jo Prabhu ko milibo chahai khoj sabad main lehi.

By the command of the Timeless Creator was the Panth promulgated;

All Sikhs are hereby charged to own the Granth as their Guru.

Know the Guru Granth to be the person visible of the Gurus.

They who would seek to meet the Lord

In the Word as manifested in the Book shall they discover him.

This is the status, the significance of the Holy Book in the Sikh way of life.

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In the Vedic hymns and chants lie the beginnings of the religious poetry of mankind. The Vedas are the oldest texts in the world. They are the repositories of ancient wisdom and of the earliest meditations of the human mind. The hymns of the *Rig Veda* will be as old as 1500-1000 B.C. The *Sam Veda*, another text of the same circuit, is a collection of

metrical hymns. The ancient Vedic scholars developed a branch of Vedic learning called *chhants*, i.e. prosody, or science of metrical composition. Much of the old religious literature is in verse which is easier to memorize and recite. The tradition of memorizing holy texts was sedulously cultivated in ancient India. Like the Vedic priests, the Jain and Buddhist monk poets composed a great deal of religious poetry.

Those versed in Sanskrit poetics made classifications of poetry from various standpoints. Dandin made a three-fold division into prose *(*gadya*),* verse *(padya*) and mixture of prose and verse *(mishra).* Experts in Sanskrit poetics held that versification was not a necessary condition of poetry. An epic poem *mahakavya* in the style of *muktaka,* a single verse formation, is an example of *padya.* A narrative tale *katha* constitutes *mishra* variety. Ornate poetry was kavya cultivated in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Apabhramsa.

Several new trends appeared in the devotional literature of the saint poets of a later period. These new forms of poetry and political composition gained vogue in medieval India. This religious poetry was composed in a variety of languages—Apabhramsa, Brajabhasha, Avadhi, Bengai, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, etc. Its creators were poets and devotees rather than professionals trained in literary niceties of Sanskrit composition. Their main concern was to sing the glory of God and to strengthen moral qualities. Occasionally, they attacked current social and religious abuses. Their verse was addressed to the learned as well as to the illiterate, to men as well as to women. Their language was easily understood by all sections of the population.

The saints and the *bhaktas threw off the shackles of pingal* of formal versification. They broke out into folk moulds of poetry giving them a musical turn. They chanted and sang their hymns or verses, and the community chanted, sang

and danced with them. In their spontaneous outbursts, they conformed to the needs of the musical tunes, both classical and *desi*, of folk origin, wherein, while singing, lapse of a few *matras (*syllables*,* accented and unaccented) could be easily made up, and it was not absolutely necessary strictly to observe the matras of various types of *chhands* of the Indian *pingal.* The poetry of the *bhakti period was non-conformist, liberal and free. This was the poetry of sadhus* and fakirs who had had no scholarly training, but who had the spiritual and mystical experience. They had seen and realized the Supreme, were free and frank, truthful and blessed.

The divine poets of Sri Guru Granth Sahib were conscious of their mission as well as of their capacity and dignity as poets. Kabir says that people might regard his outpourings as songs only, but they are in reality meditations on the Supreme Being (GG, 335). Guru Nanak calls himself a *dhadi* (minstrel) and *shair*, poet (GG, 150, 660). Guru Arjan

and the other Gurus, proclaim that they were called upon by the Creator Himself to proclaim their divine command and inspiration. Guru Arjan had proclaimed that the *bani* had originated in the transcendent realms, *dhur ki bani*. (GG, 628). Guru Nanak believed (Japu, 38) that the shabad (divine word) was coined in the mint of the mind filled with the nectar of continence, realization, knowledge, fear and love of the Lord. Ravidas proclaimed himself to be a liberated soul and dweller of the city of joy (GG, 345). Namdev spoke from the pedestal where it was impossible to discriminate between Allah and Rama or between the Hindu temple and the mosque. These saint-poets spoke naturally and spontaneously. Their singing and chanting gave the finishing to their songs. Adherence to the rules of prosody was not their forte, though they quite often composed also within the framework of rules and established forms.

Many aspects of the Indian tradition of poetry, *dhuni, riti alankar, rasa, chhand,* etc., are followed in the hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, yet no *pad (stanza*) or hymn exactly fits into any traditional mould or conforms to the set pattern of prosodic *matra* (syllables) of the Indian *pingal.* While the Indian milieu dominates the spiritual and emotional sentiment of these holy singers, their poetry was the spontaneous outflow of their inspiration; and they obviously did not toil over composition. Two considerations chiefly weighed with them: first, setting of the hymn in a given *raga (*musical measure*)* and, secondly, its setting in a *pada* (stanza) form; with the burden of the song lying in the couplet of *rahau (*pause*).* The *slokas* they composed are mostly couplets or groups of couplets. Determination of the *raga* affected all other poetic features such as the scheme of *alankars*, *rasa,* atmosphere, diction, imagery. In a hymn, as in the Indian scheme of *ragas*, each one has its peculiar *rasa*

*(*mood*),* atmosphere, and time or season of singing. *Dupada* (two-stanza poems*, tipada* (three-stanza poem*), chaupada* (four-stanza poem), *astpadi* (eight-stanza poem*), solaha* (sixteen-stanza poem*), chhants,* lyrics, longer and shorter poems such as the *Japu, vars, Oankar, Sidhgosti, Sukhmani* et. al. are all stanzaic arrangements. The stanzas in the Guru Granth Sahib vary in length from one-line compositions to eight-line structures. Lines in stanzas are, or can be, measured by the Indian system of *matras* (syllables) without their conforming exactly to any of the fixed metric *chhands; gan,* or *varnik* (word system*) chhands* being mainly ruled out in case of the hymns in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The length of a line or the number of the feet in it varies from a short utterance to a long undulating one, with a corresponding number of pauses, etc. Rhyme is invariably there. Alliteration and internal rhymes are often introduced.

The peculiar thematic or emotional nature of some of the extraordinary hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib, mostly cast in the moulds of folk-poetry of the Punjab is pointed out in the superimposition of the caption which, besides, indicates the *raga* and the pitch *(ghar*), in which the hymn is to be sung. Such peculiar descriptions in the titles are as follows:

(1) *arati*, *anjali, sohila, swayyas, japu, thittin, patti, phunhe, bavan-akhari,* and *baramaha* are the titles which indicate the form of poetry; *patti, bavan-akhari* and *oankar* are in the form of acrostics, propounding philosophical and religious themes and doctrines*; thittin* and *baramaha* are built around the lunar days and the twelve solar months*; swayas* are encomiums offered to the Gurus.

(2) *alahanian (*dirges), *sadd, karhale, gatha, ghorian, chhant, dakhne, var, ruttin* and *var sat* (week days) are the moulds of the folk-poetry of Punjab.

In the common life of the country, *alahnian* are sung to mourn a death*, ghorian* are sung to celebrate a wedding; similarly *chhants* are recited at the time of marriage; *sadd* (call) is a dirge*, pahare* quarters of day or night*, ruttin (*seasons*), var sat* (week days*), din-rain* (day and night) are the compositions stressing the importance of time which should be utilized in remembrance of the Lord.

All the above titles of category 1 and 2 are stanzaic poems. These moulds, however, are not the innovations of the Gurus.

Vedic hymns *(suktas)* are *padas* with varying number of *padas (*stanzas*)* called *mantras* in each; later, with the rise of the *bhakti* movement*, padas* in praise of Visnu, called the

vishanpadas were most common in the developing Indian vernaculars. The *bavan-akkhari, patti* or *acrostic* forms are also traditional forms*; baramaha* was common mould for singing of the pangs of separation in love in the various Indian languages, including Sanskrit. Kalidas has composed a poem on the season: under varying names, poems of the themes and spirit of *alahnian*, *sadd* and *ghorian* have been sung in all medieval literatures of India. Sloka has been the most popular mould in Sanskrit and Hindi literatures. It is a couplet piece with a serious philosophical theme. So *padas* (hymns based on *pad or stanzaic arrangement) and sloka*, the chief poetic forms used in the Guru Granth Sahib have descended from the preceding Indian religious literature.

A brief description of some of the poetic forms occurring in the Guru Granth Sahib is given below. Each *raga* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib—there are thirty-one *ragas* totally—is arranged in a set order. First will come padas or the prosodic

forms followed by longer snatches such as *astpadis.* Then will come *chhants* and *vars*. And last of all, the compositions of *bhaktas.*

ASTPADIS*.* Astpadis, eight liners. Hymns in Sri Guru Granth Sahib comprising eight *(*ast*)* lines, besides the line containing pause of *rahau.* This is the standard form, but the number of lines in an *astpadi* can vary*. Astpadis* occur in all the different *ragas* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Totally, there are 305 of them counted in the entire text.

CHAUPADA is a four-stanza hymn, besides the line of *rahau* or pause. With the exception of Bairari, Tukhari, Kalian and Jaijaivanti, they occur in all *ragas* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Gauri contains 210 of them, Asa 159 and Sorathi 81.

CHHAKA. A sixer. It signifies a bunch of six *padas*

CHHEPADA is a hymn containing, besides the verse of *rahau* (pause), six *padas* or stanzas. They are few in

numbers and occur in *ragas* Gauri, Asa, Vadhans, Suhi, Ramkali, Maru and Bhairau.

CHAUTUKA. A hymn containing *padas* of four lines each. Chautukas are interspersed in many different *ragas* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

DAKHNA. A salok in Lahndi dialect, western Punjabi, employed commonly in Guru Arjan's hymns.

DUPADA. A hymn containing, besides the *rahau* lines, two stanzas.

PANJPADA. A *panjpada* is a hymn of five stanzas excluding the refrain *(rahau).*

PAURI, lit. ladder, is stanza adopted for *vars*, balladic poetry. *Pauris* of these *vars* generally consist of 6 to 8 lines each. Stanzas of *Japuji* are also traditionally called *pauris.*

SHABAD represents ‘Voice of the Master’, or word revealed. All forms of verse included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, padas, astpadis* and *chhants* are *shabads.*

SALOK. A two-liner classical prosodic form allowing a variety of metrical arrangement. Though a *salok may not unravel new strands of thought, it may well enlarge upon* different aspects of an idea investing it with the freshness of an independent poem.

SOLAHA. A sixteen-stanza hymn. Raga Maru alone contains 62 Solahas 22 by Guru Nanak, 24 by Guru Amar Das, 2 by Guru Ram Das and 14 by Guru Arjan.

TIPADA. A hymn made up of 3 *padas* or *stanzas.*

TUK does not exist as a title or sub-title in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Any single line of the *bani* is a *tuk* and is close to what is known as *sutraor aphorism in Sanskrit or in the orthodox system of philosophy.*

VAR. An old form of Punjabi narrative poetry highlighting the exploits and acts of heroism and chivalry. On the psychological plane the struggle is between the good and evil propensities in man.

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T. S.

SUKHMANI *(*G. S. Talib*),* titled *Gauri Sukhmani* in the Guru Granth Sahib after the musical measure Gauri to which it belongs, is a lengthy composition by Guru Arjan which many include in their daily regimen of prayers. The site, once enclosed by a dense wood, where it was composed around AD 1602-03, is still marked on the bank of the Ramsar pool in the city of Amritsar. It is said that Baba Sri Chand, elder son of Guru Nanak and founder of the Udasi order, came to Amritsar to meet Guru Arjan, then engaged in composing the poem. The Guru who had by that time completed sixteen *astpadis, or cantos, requested him to continue the composition. Baba Sri Chand, out of humility, only recited the sloka* of Guru Nanak following the Mul Mantra in the *Japu—"adi sachu jugadi sachu hai bhi sachu Nanak hosi bhi sachu*"—In the beginning, in the primal time was He the Eternal Reality; in the present is He the Eternal Reality. To eternity shall He the Reality abide (GG, 285). This *sloka* was

thereupon repeated by Guru Arjan at the head of the seventeenth *astpadi.*

The word *sukhmani* is rendered into English as “consoler of the mind.” The entire poem has been translated into English more than once under the commonly preferred title, “Psalm of Peace” or “Song of Peace,” signifying the soothing effect it has on the mind of the reader. *Sukh* literally means peace or comfort and *mani* mind or heart. The couplet, constituting *rahau*, the only one in the composition, which means pause or rest and which is an equivalent of the Hebrew word selah occurring in the Psalms, sums up the most characteristic feature of this *bani.* According o this couplet, *Sukhmani* is the bringer of the bliss of the Lord’s name; it dwells in the hearts of those who love Him.

The *Sukhmani* comprises twenty-four *astpadis* or cantos, each comprising eight stanzas. They are composed

in the metre chaupai. A *sloka* or couplet precedes each *astpadi*. The first seven stanzas of the *astpadi* explore the theme stated in the preceding *sloka* and the eighth sometimes sums up the astpadi but, more often, becomes a paean of praise placing the theme in the context of an overall vision of Eternal Reality. This structure is maintained throughout and though, from canto to canto, there may not be traceable progression of thought as in a philosophical work, there is a continuing unity of spiritual and ethical tone. One of the fundamental texts of the Sikh faith, the Sukhmani presents a complete scheme of the teachings of the Sikh faith. While each *astpadi* has a fresh vision to impart, a particular aspect of Truth to unfold, the whole text may be regarded as the reiteration of basic themes such as Divine immanence, Divine compassion, abundance of grace, God's succouring hand, the merit of devotion, of holy company and humility. With such reiteration, the composition as a whole

has a remarkable gripping quality reinforced by the striking imagery which in stanza after stanza brings home to the seeker the truths he must own.

The Sukhmani opens with a *manglacharan* or invocation to the Supreme Being. In this four-line *sloka*, the Supreme Being is remembered as *adi gure* (Primal Preceptor), *jugadi gure (Preceptor from the beginning of time existing), sati gure* (the Truth Preceptor) and *sri gurdeve* (Preceptor Divine). The following six astpadis dwell on the advantages of remembrance, in a spirit of love, devotion and surrender, of the Holy Name which results in linking up one's consciousness with the divine. This brings bliss, peace and approval at the Divine Court.

Name Divine is man's true helper and friend, the true conferrer of joy and bliss as against the trust in yogic austerities, ascetic practices and ritual worship which are of

no avail in liberating him from the cycle of birth and death. Ineffective in the same way are intellectual feats and membership of religious orders. Remembrance of the Divine Name is the most exalted of all religious practices and the purest of all ritual actions. Ungrateful to God and indifferent to devotion, humanity is in bondage to lust, wrath, avarice, attachment and pride—the five evils. Forgetful of God, man remains attached to *maya* which is compared to rejecting a jewel and chasing a cowrie. Man is warned of those drawbacks and is exhorted constantly to meditate on the Divine Name which becomes possible only when he overcomes his ego and cultivates humility which, in turn, is attained only through the Lord's grace.

Astpadis seven to eleven deal with the concept of perfect man, and ideal man, a man of God. He is *jivanmukta*, i.e. one who has become liberated while still living in the mortal body. Such a person is detached from grief and joy.

To him gold and dust*, amrit* (nectar) and poison, pauper and prince, worldly honour and dishonour are alike. The company of the holy—*sadh sangat*—which confers on the disciple manifold spiritual benefits is a necessary prerequisite to achieving this ideal, though access to this association is also dependent upon Divine grace. People so sanctified have a wisdom even greater than that imparted by the Vedas and live beyond the *triguna*, i.e. the three attributes of *maya*. Remembrance of God's Name in the company of these saintly people is preferable to all rituals and creeds. These verses also endorse access of all humanity, irrespective of colour, caste and creed, to divine knowledge, and to emancipation through meditation on His Name. Anyone who, with the Divine favour, keeps the company of the holy and repeats the Name becomes God-enlightened, the Brahm-giani. He is free from all dubiety and worldly entanglements, and his mind is always at peace. In

the spirit of the God-enlightened may be beheld God who is otherwise *nirankar*, the formless Supreme Being. God's hukam is the sole source of the vast and variegated creation. Far from being indifferent to the infinitude of creation, He responds to the love of the devout who are the crown of His creation. Such persons are always blessed with joy and spontaneous bliss and they transcend the pleasures and passions of this material world.

Astpadis *twelve to twenty stress the significance of* sadhna*, or discipline, for the* spiritual progress of man. Self-conceit and slander against the saints are deadly sins which must be totally avoided. The one who slanders the saints is considered to be the worst evil-doer, bereft of all spiritual blessing. He perishes, writhing like a fish out of water; hopeless and unfulfilled, he leaves the world.

However, this kind of evil-doing is traced to the consequences of deeds in a previous birth. This endless cycle of coming and going can be broken only with the help of the Divine Preceptor who is like a lamp in the darkness, a guide in the pathless forest. His word helps man as a pillar supports an edifice. Like a boat carrying a stone across the water, he enables his disciple to pass over the worldly ocean and end the torments of transmigration. However, such a Preceptor one meets only by God's grace. The eradication of pride and inculcation of humility are two other stepping-stones which lead to the Divine portal. Pride in such things as royal authority, beauty, ritual acts, austere practices, wealth and estates is condemned. Besides being humble and contented, one must repose life's hope solely in God. Man is exhorted to recite the glory of God which will bring him true blessing.

The last four *astpadis*, i.e. from twenty-one to twenty-four, contain an exposition of God's absolute powers. He is the sole creator of this world and none can fathom His greatness. He is the creator of, but free from, *triguna* maya and is infinite and eternal. There was utter emptiness before the creation which is the result of His Will. Here the monist aspect of the Lord as the Sole Existence is emphasized. He is the Supreme comforter, compassionate, controller of the inner faculties and cherisher of all. He is without rancour and it is through His *hukam* and grace that man acquires true wisdom. The path to this ideal is shown by the Preceptor, who applies the collyrium of enlightenment by banishing the darkness of ignorance. By such enlightenment, man seeks company of the saintly and sees the Lord within himself and in all the external creation as well. God abides within all yet remains unattached. The last astpadi sums up the teachings of the earlier cantos. The one who wants to find God is

exhorted to dwell on the Divine Name, as taught by the Guru, in the company of the saints which alone will help him shed ego and inculcate humility. Thus will he discard worldly desire and cross the ocean of fire (i.e. of sin and suffering).

Sukhmani *is a theological statement of the major tenets of Sikhism expressed in a devotional poetic form. Recited by the Sikhs as a part of their morning prayer, it is one of the easier texts in the Guru Granth Sahib. It is similar in syntax and structure, though its essential meaning will elude one not attuned to the spiritual experience and the idiom and phraseology of* gurbani*. The language character is close to Khari Boli, the Hindi that had evolved in the areas lying northwest of Delhi, with a distinct* inclination towards Punjabi. The expression here, however, is poetic in its overtones and shares a common character with the variety of Hindi or Bhakha that was used by religious teachers all over northern India. While this language has evolved out of Braj, it is closer

to Punjabi in its grammatical form. This will be substantiated by comparing it with the language of a poet writing in pure Braj, such as Surdas, who flourished around the same period as Guru Arjan. To indicate the differences of the language of *Sukhmani* from Braj even Bhakha, a few examples may be given*:*

*Thivai (*3.2*)* is Punjabi, so is *ditha* (7.7*). Khate (12.5) is pure Punjabi.* In *niki kiri* (17.5), *niki* (small) is Punjabi*. Ohi* (23.4)) is Punjabi, of which the Braj equivalent would be *vehi, Hoi* (past verbal form) is Punjabi*. Bhau* (18.7*)* for *bhaya (*fear) is an especial form given in gurbani and occurring frequently. The Punjabi character of language is especially decipherable in the forms of verb ending in the past tense*. Kathia* (8.7), *pachhata* (17.8*), jata* (19.8), in the sense of *jania, japia* (20.*2), rahia* (20.3*), aradhia (salok* 24) are some of the examples. Other verb forms to illustrate this point are *utarasi (*19.*7*) which, however, is also Rajasthani*; bahai*

(15.2*); lae* (13.5) and *laini* (15.5*). Here and there pure Hindi forms may be seen*: hovat *(*21.1), tumari *(*20.7*) and biapat (*21.*1*). Japat rhyming with it in the same stanza is Punjabi with a Hindi ending.

The language of the *Sukhmani* can be best described as a synthesis of the Bhakha and Punjabi. In the more philosophical and meditative of their compositions, the holy Gurus are inclined to use a variety of Hindi with Punjabi overtones, while in the more deeply intimate pieces such as the chhants and *pauris* of *Vars*, Punjabi, in its dialectical variations, has been employed. This principle, by no means absolute, is only broadly applicable.

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G. S. T.

SUNN *(***L. M. Joshi**), a Punjabi form of the Sanskrit term *sunya (*Pali*,* sunna*)* is derived from the root *svi* which is connected with the root *su*; both these roots mean 'to swell', 'to expand' or 'to increase'. From the etymological standpoint the term *sunya* is often used in the sense of 'zero' or 'cipher' (Arabic*, sifr*), a symbol of naught. However, 'zero' again, when used by a mathematician with a figure, increases the value of that figure ten times.

The word *sunya* belongs to the religious and philosophical terminology of India. Its meaning has to be explored in relation to two other cognate words, viz*. sunyata* and *sunyavada.* The words *sunya* and *sunyata* have attained widespread currency chiefly through the agency of Buddhist literature: while *'sunyavada'* is the name given one of the systems of Buddhistic thought, the word *sunya* means void, empty, a lonely place or solitude. The word *sunyata* means

voidness, emptiness, vacuity or nothingness. The word *'sunyavada'* has been translated as 'the ism of void' or 'the doctrine of empty'. The barrenness of this translation is inherent in the pejorative force which gave birth to this name in anti-Buddhist circles. It is on the authority of anti-Buddhist Brahmanical sources that Monier-Williams described *'sunyavada'* in 1899 as 'the (Buddhist) doctrine of the non-existence (of any spirit either supreme or human), Buddhism, atheism.'

As a mater of fact, it is in the work of the Brahmanical theologians, such as Kumarilabhatta and Sankaracarya, that the name 'Sunyavada' is employed for the Madhyamika School of Buddhist philosophy. The Buddhist philosophers themselves have never used or approved this nomenclature.

At numerous places in the Pali scriptures it is stated that the world *(loka*) is empty *(sunya*); it is empty of self

(atman) and empty of anything belonging to self. There is nothing in the world with which one could identify one's self, or of which one could say, 'this is myself.' A whole section of the *Patisambhidamagga* is entitled 'discourse on the void.' In this section twenty-five kinds of void are enumerated. The Mahayanasutras and Sastras elaborated these teachings concerning *sunya* and *sunyata* and developed a soteriological technique based on the philosophy of Emptiness. A class of Buddhist Sanskrit literature consisting of the Prajnaparamitasutras is devoted to the exposition of emptiness.

The *Prajnaparamitasutras* teach that *sunyata is the nature of all phenomenal* things or entities called *dharmas.* Things are empty *(sunya*) because they are conditioned; they are conditioned because they depend on a multiplicity of causes*. Nothing is* uncaused; therefore nothing is free from *sunya*, emptiness. The dependence of entities on

causes and conditions constitutes their emptiness. All things or phenomena are subject to dependent origination *(pratiya-samutapada);* therefore all phenomena are characterized by emptiness *(sunyata).* This fact is called *dharma-sunyata*, the emptiness of *dharmas* or the phenomena.

Nagarjuna who flourished in the first century AD is the main originator of the doctrine of *sunya* which in fact offers the critique of all the philosophies. Going beyond the viewpoints of *asti (*is*) nasti* (is not) about the Supreme Truth, the *sunyavadins* adopt a dialectical method which seeks to abolish all viewpoints but, side by side, they do not claim to have *sunyavad,* a viewpoint in itself. The aim of this teaching is soteriological and not philosophical.

Sunya means that all the objects of the world are lacking in their 'own-nature' (*svabhava dharma* or 'self-existence' *(atmabhava*); that is to say, the dharmas are

without an essence of inward nature of their own and are without self. The absence of own-nature *(nihsvabhavata*) and the absence of self *(nairatmya*) are thus synonyms of emptiness. Not only the persons are characterized by emptiness (*pudgala-nairatmya)* but also the things are characterized by emptiness (dharma-nairatmya*).* He who realizes this twofold emptiness *(sunyata)* attains transcendental wisdom *(prajnaparamita).*

The *Prajnaparamitasutras* have employed the master symbol *sunyata* not only for the phenomenal things but also for the Absolute. The phenomenal things are called *sunya* because they are dependent on causes and conditions. The Absolute is called *sunya* because it is devoid of distinctions and discriminations*. Sunyata* demonstrates the ultimate unreality of entities and the unseekability of the Absolute which transcends thought and speech.

The concept of *sunya (sunn*) was transmitted by the Siddhas and the Nathas to the *sant*-poets of medieval Vaisnavism. In the works of the Sikh Gurus we find the last phase of the development of the concept o*f sunya* outside Buddhism. The Sikh Gurus have used the words *sunn*, *sunn kala, anahat-sunn* and *sunn*-samadhi numerous times in their religious compositions. A careful analysis of the use of these key-terms in the Sikh canon shows that their meaning is, in most cases, different from that found in Buddhism. In one case, however, there seems to be a continuity of the word and meaning from the time of the Buddhist Sutras to that of the hymns sung by the Gurus. This continuity is found in those cases in which *sunn* or *sunya* is employed as a symbol of the Absolute. Thus, for example, it is said that when one is awakened to the teaching of the Guru, one merges into the Void *(sunn samaia)* even while alive—*jivat sunni samania gur sakhi jagi (GG, 857).* Of course the

concept of the Absolute in Sikhism differs from that in the Madhyamika, but there can be no doubt that the Absolute is called sunn because it is devoid of duality and discrimination. This negative structure in speech with regard to the Reality is the basic function of the symbol *sunn*. All positive descriptions imply limitation and determination. The word sunn declares that the Truth is beyond limitations and determinations. Emptiness of Buddhism means 'no doctrine about Truth'*; sunn* in Sikhism means 'no conception about the Inconceivable.'

An important feature of the conception of the Void in Sikhism is that it can be realized through transcendental devotion *(nam)* which consists in the constant mindfulness of the Divine *(simaran*). This feature brings in many positive elements as a matter of course and consequently the ecstatic experience of the Divine is characterized by positive attributes. Nevertheless, these positive attributes do not

exhaust the innate state of *sahaj* or the Void *(sunn).* Kabir uses *sunn* in the sense of space, finite as well as infinite*, i.e. ghatakash* and *mahakash.* The three *lokas* enveloping *sunya* is nothing but Brahman with *maya* but the fourth *sunya* about which Guru Nanak stresses more is pure Brahman who is *nirakar* and *nirguna*. In Rag Maru, Guru Nanak defines *sunn* as the creative power of the Almighty—*paunu pani sunnai te saje (GG, 1037*). The sense of nada has also been exacted from the term *sunn* in the *Sidha Gosti* where Guru Nanak says*:* "nau sar subhar dasavai pure tah anahat sunn vajavahi ture—after filling up the nine pitchers with love, through the tenth gate the entry is made; the *anahat sunya* in the form of melodies is realized" (GG*,* 943). The term *sunn* in the Guru Granth Sahib is thus used in a variety of senses, of which predominantly are Brahman with and without *maya*, the creation, the power of Brahman and nada.

Here the unstruck sound, inaccessible to ears, goes on as 'the music of spheres' as it were, and the wonderful *(acharaj)* bewilderment *(bismad*) characteristic of it cannot be described (kahanu na jai*).* Peace *(santi),* bliss *(sukh, ananda*) and satiety *(santokhu)* are attained in this state. But here in the ultimate state there is neither he who attains these things nor he who listens to their description; void has gone to Void*,* emptiness had merged into Emptiness. He says*: sunnahi sunnu milia samdarsi*—the individual spirit has joined the supreme spirit (GG, 1103).

Bhai Gurdas, explicator of Gurbani, uses sunya in the sense of cosmic silence—*diti bangi nivaji kari sunni samani hoa jahana* (1.35). As in the *Hathayogapradipika,* Guru Nanak also accepts that *sunya* is within*, sunya* is without and the three *lokas* are also imbued with *sunya*. Whosoever becomes the knower of the truth*, sunya*, goes beyond sins and virtues. He transcends both error and excellence.

It may be observed that like the word Nirvana, the word *sunya* also underwent a gradual process of transformation in its meaning and use in the literature of medieval India. The Madhyamika conception of *sunyata* was almost completely changed in Nathapantha, Kabirpantha and Sikhism.

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L M J.

SYMBOLISM IN SIKHISM (**Taran Singh**). The poetry of the Guru Granth Sahib is noteworthy especially for the wealth and variety of its images and symbols. The Gurus and *sants* whose compositions form part of the Holy Book have rendered their mystical and spiritual experience in the idiom of poetry. A large number of similes and metaphors and numerous other forms of figurative expression enrich the text. Most of the imagery has come from the storehouse of Indian culture, but there are in the text allusions to Islam and the Islamic way of life as well.

The symbolism adopted is more akin to the theme of the hymn than a mere embellishment. Most of the imagery in the text has been derived from the ordinary householder's life. For example, the experience of bliss from the union of a human soul with the Supreme Soul is expressed with the help of an image of conjugal union. Apart from numerous such symbols scattered throughout the Scripture, the whole of *Phunhe*, a composition of Guru Arjan's included in the Guru Granth Sahib after the Gatha verses, is couched in figurative speech wherein the 'woman' is adjured to love her 'spouse' because that would be for her like ablution in the ambrosial water of the Divine Name that should purify 'her' of all sloth and sin and bring to 'her' the bliss of union with the Divine. The symbol of lotus, which grows and blooms in muddy water but still remains unsullied, has often been used to bring home the idea that to realize God man need not renounce the world. He should lead a life of detachment living amid worldly temptations.

According to Sikh teaching, God is *nirankar*, i.e. without form. He is Infinite, Inaccessible, Indescribable, Ineffable and Unknowable. To make Him comprehensible to the common man, various symbols and metaphors have been resorted to. He has been called the Sultan, i.e. the king, husband, father, gardener, farmer, et al. He is the creator

of this universe and of all that is there in it and like a true gardener or farmer, He takes very good care of it. He rules over the entire universe where His will reigns supreme. He loves his creation as the husband loves his wife. For the family, He is the father. He has the responsibility of looking after it.

Man's self or soul is a spark of the Supreme Self. Its essential attributes are *sat* (real), *chit* (consciousness), and *anand*, (perennial bliss). It is immortal and rewarded or punished according to its good or evil deeds in this life. It transmigrates from one body to the other depending on its deeds. The process of transmigration into a low or high species is explained with the metaphor of the Persian wheel: the buckets on the chain of the wheel ascend and descend in turn, implying a soul's migration into the body of a higher or lower species. The second commonly used metaphor for the soul is that of *mundh* or *dhan*, i.e. a woman whose husband is away and who is pining for union with him.

Man, i.e. mind, of man is an attribute which raises him higher than any other form of creation in this universe. Going through the process of transmigrations man has come by this rare opportunity which he must now avail himself of fully. Among the various functions of *man*, also called *hirda*, are *surti*, i.e. concentration, and *budhi*, i.e. intellect. It has been compared with the lotus both in its upward (*sudha*) and downward (*ulta*) condition; whereas the former condition denotes its receptive nature, the latter refers to its perverted or non-receptive nature. These qualities of man have been brought forth with the help of figures of *maigal*, i.e. a mad elephant, which destroys everything that comes its way; of *khar*, i.e. ass, which is downright obstinate; of *karhala*, i.e. camel, which is tempted by the wayside creepers of desires; of *kala haran*, i.e. black buck, which contains the musk in its own body, but ignorant of this runs around looking for it among the

bushes; of *dadar*, i.e. frog, which is happy in the mud and does not learn a lesson from the lotus which remains above the mud though born out of it; of *sasi*, i.e. moon, which has no light of its own but shines in the light of the sun; of *haran*, i.e. deer, which gets enchanted by the fragrance emanating from its own body and of a *bail*, i.e. bullock, which pulls the burden of the body.

The two attitudes of mind, when it is attracted towards God or towards the world by the material comforts of life, belong respectively to the categories of *gurmukh* and *manmukh*. The inner instincts of these two are explained with the help of metaphors of *hans* (swan) for *gurmukh* which picks at pearls and thus has the power of discrimination and of *bagla* (crane) for *manmukh* which is known for its hypocrisy for it stands on one leg with its eyes half closed as of meditating but pounces upon the small fish as soon as it comes within its reach. The uselessness to society of a *manmukh* is brought out with the help of metaphors of *simal* (oak) tree; *andhla* (blind man) who cannot see; and of *kaihan* (bronze metal) which glitters but shows up its true worth when rubbed.

Like the musk of a black deer, the *man* resides in human body which is called *kachi gagar* (unbaked earthen pitcher), *pinjar* (cage), *rath* (chariot), etc. The world where the human soul spends a certain period equivalent to the life of its mortal frame has been described in the various metaphors of an inn the visitor stays in for a while; of a *vari* (garden); of *peka ghar* (parents' home) where the bride (human being) lives only until her marriage (death) after which she leaves for *sahura ghar* (in-laws' house); of *bhavjal* or the rising ocean; of *gandharb nagari*, i.e. an illusory abode; and of such others.

Sikhism attaches a great deal of importance to the institution of *guru*. The Guru has been described as a *setu* (bridge) between God and man. The importance of Guru in the spiritual uplift of man and in making him worthy of acceptance at the Divine Portal is explained with the help of various metaphors and symbols taken from mundane life, such as that of *khevat* (boat-man or sailor) who ferries the boat-of-life across the river of life to a place where the Lord abides; of *sarovar* (sacred pool) where *gurmukhs* (swans) dwell and pick up pearls (good deeds) as their diet; of *tirath* (lit. a holy place for a dip, but originally the safe place to cross the river) which enables man to wade through the river of life; of *sur* (sun) which enlightens the *sasi* (moon) or the dark minds; of *vichola* (mediator) who helps arrange the marriage of man (with God); of *anjan* and *kajal* (collyrium) which improves the sight of our mind's eye; of *paharua* (the watchman) who drive away the thieves of *kam* (lust), *krodh* (anger), *lobh* (greed), *moh* (infatuation) and *ahankar* (ego); of *sura* (warrior) who wields the sword of *jnana* (knowledge) and drives away the evil of ignorance; of *jot* (light) which illuminates the dark recesses of the human mind; and *paras*, the philosopher's stone which turns dross into gold. He is also likened to a *siddha* (the perfect being), the *jogi* or yogi (who is in communion with the *mata* (mother), *pita* (father) and the *bandhap* (relative).

Meditation on the name of God has been recommended time and again as the only means of realizing Him, but the nature of His Name and the method of meditation have not been elaborated. However, there are many symbols and images used in the Guru Granth Sahib which reveal to us the nature of His Name; it is called the *amrit* (nectar) which rejuvenates man; *mat dudh* (mother's milk) which nourishes the child and the energy gained from it works in man throughout the life-period; *sajan* or *mitar* (friend),

mata (mother) and *pita* (father) who are man's real well-wishers; *tulha* (raft) which enables man wade across the ocean of life; *pauri* (ladder) with the help of which man can climb to the Lord's seat; a *kharag* (sword) which cuts asunder the net of evil; and *paras*, i.e. the philosopher's stone which transforms the gross mind. *Nam* has also been called *nidhan*, i.e. the treasure of all excellence and *daru* or *aukhad* which relieves man of all his evil propensities.

The metaphysical or mystical experiences have been made comprehensible in images taken from household life. The entire poetic diction of the Guru Granth Sahib is surcharged with symbolic meaning. When Guru Nanak says—*tu suni harna kalia ki variai rata ram* (listen o black deer, why are you in intoxication). Black deer is actually no black deer, it is symbolic of human mind and the field is no piece of land, but this vast world of earthly pleasures. *Rata* is also symbolic as it connotes deeply dyed in Lord's love. Farid says *sarvar pankhi hekro phahival pachas* (at the pool there is but a solitary bird, but the captors ready to seize it can be counted by the fifties); the *sarvar* (tank) here is symbolic of the world, the *pankhi*, bird, is symbolic of man, and *phahival* (captor), of the temptations of worldly pleasures. Raga Suhi opens with this line of Guru Nanak: *bhanda dhoi bais dhupu devahu tau dudhai kau javahu* (wash the vessel, smoke it for disinfection, then go to fetch the milk); *bhanda* vessel, is the symbol of mind, *dhupu* (incense) is the symbol of purity, and milk is the symbol of the *nam*; Name; if it is so, then washing, disinfecting and going also becomes symbolic language. So is *sapu pirai paiai bikhu antari mani rosu* (If a snake is put in a basket, it continues to have poison and to nurse wrath). Here *sapu* (snake) stands for the mind, *pirai* (basket) stands for ritualistic restraints, *bikhu*, poison stands for evil tendencies. *sifati salahanu chhadi kai*

karangi laga hansu (abandoning praise of the Lord, the swan is chasing the carcass). The swan is the holy person or the soul; carcass stands for the evil pleasures.

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T. S.

TANKHAH (**Balbir Singh Nanda**), from Persian *tankhwah*, generally meaning pay or salary, has an additional, ironical connotation in Sikh vocabulary. The word in this sense means expiatory penalty levied upon a Sikh from breach of *rahit*, i.e. the prescribed code of conduct or of a vow religiously made. This use of the term appears to have come into vogue during the first half of the eighteenth century. The earliest use of the term *tankhah* and *tankhahi* or *tankhaia* appears in *Tankhahnama* attributed to Bhai Nand Lal, Rahitnamas ascribed to Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Chaupa Singh (dates not specified) and Gur Ratan Mal (*Sau Sakhi*) compiled by Sahib Singh in 1724 (or 1734). While Bhai Nand Lal's *Tankhahnama* and Chaupa Singh's *Rahitnama* list faults of omission or commission which render a Sikh *tankhahia*, i.e. liable to penalty, Bhai Daya Singh's *Rahitnama* also suggests amounts of fine for some of the misdemeanours and mistranslations. Chaupa Singh, on the authority of Guru Gobind Singh, lays down a general rule with regard to the administration of *tankhah*: "If someone who has committed a *kurahit* (breach of the code) stands up with folded hands before all, i.e. the *sangat*, pardon him: do not be adamant. Realize *tankhah*, but bear him no rancour or animosity."

Ordinarily it is only the *sangat*, holy assembly of Sikhs or *Panj Piare*, five Sikhs chosen or appointed by it, who have the authority to declare a person *tankhahia* and impose *tankhah*. The *sangat* or *Panj Piare* will confront the offending member of the community with the charge and seek his explanation which, if found unsatisfactory, leads to his being declared a *tankhahia*, who generally accepts with humility the *tankhah* levied on him by way of penance for his error and who after undergoing the "punishment" returns to the fold ridding himself of all blemish. It is not uncommon for a Sikh who has

violated the religious discipline on any count to confess to the *sangat* or *Panj Piare* and voluntarily attract *tankhah* in expiation. Since the purpose of *tankhah* is to reclaim the defaulter, it generally requires him to perform certain religious acts such as reciting for a given number of times specified scriptural texts in addition to the daily regimen of prayers, and humble service at a *gurdwara* which may be in the form of dusting the shoes of the devotees or scrubbing used utensils in Guru ka Langar or the community refectory. One may also have to make an offering of *karah prasad* worth a declared sum or make a cash contribution towards the Guru's *golak* or the common fund. In case of one or more of the four *bajar kurahits* or major lapses, i.e. cutting of hair; smoking, adultery and consumption of *kuttha* or *halal* (flesh of an animal slaughtered according to Muslim practice), occurring, a *tankhahia* after due atonement must also he reinitiated.

When an act of an individual affects the community as a whole, the authority of Akal Takht at Amritsar is invoked. The procedure is the same as followed by local *sangats* in dealing with violation of the religious code. In cases, rare so far, where a person refuses to accept its verdict, the Akal Takht has the power to excommunicate him/her.

The first recorded instance of the award of religious punishment involved Guru Gobind Singh himself. According to *Gur Ratan Mal*, the Guru once travelling through Rajputana reached Naraina, also called Dadudvara after the Saint Dadu who had lived there, where he saluted the sepulchre of the saint by lifting an arrow to his head. The Sikhs accompanying him took exception to this and wished to impose *tankhah* for he had infringed his own edict: *gor marhi mat bhul na mane* (worship not even by mistake graves or places of cremation). The Guru appreciated the Sikhs' vigilance and

immediately offered to pay the fine. The Sikhs then debated the quantum of *tankhah*, adds another old source, *Malva Des Ratan di Sakhi Pothi*. They in the end asked him to pay Rs.125 which amount they spent on the purchase of a tent for Guru ka Langar.

In 1733, a Sikh, Bhai Subeg Singh, who was an employee of the Mughal government at Lahore and who was deputed to negotiate peace with the Khalsa, was, on reaching the appointed venue, first declared *tankhahia* for being in the service of the oppressors and allowed to commence parleys only after he had made good the *tankhah*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) was once summoned to the Akal Takht and, held guilty of moral and religious misdemeanour, was awarded *tankhah* including physical punishment which he readily accepted. The latter punishment was, however, waived by Akali Phula Singh, then *jathedar*, of the Akal Takht. More recent instances are those of the imposition of *tankhah* on Baba Kartar Singh Bedi, one of the direct descendants of Guru Nanak, for supporting Mahant Narain Das, the head priest of the Nankana shrine, who had started a campaign against the reformist Sikhs culminating in an open massacre of them on 20 February 1921; proclamation of Jathedar Teja Singh Bhuchchar as *tankhahia* and his expulsion from the membership of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee for his defiance of and disrespect towards the Panj Piare who inaugurated *kar-seva* or cleansing by voluntary service of the holy tank at Amritsar in June 1923; and the excommunication on 6 August 1928 of Babu Teja Singh of the Panch Khalsa Diwan, Bhasaur, and his wife for garbling the scriptural texts and altering the form of *gurmantra* as well as of *ardas*.

In November 1961, five Sikhs, eminent in the religious hierarchy, were named as Panj Piare to investigate and decide upon an allegation that Master Tara Singh, the

seniormost political leader of the Sikhs, had broken his solemnly made religious vow during an agitation against the government. Tara Singh was pronounced guilty of having gone back on his plighted word and of having blemished thereby the Sikh tradition of religious steadfastness and sacrifice in that he had abandoned his fast begun after *ardas* or prayer at Sri Akal Takht without achieving the stipulated goal. He was laid under expiation to have an *akhand path* or unbroken reading of the Guru Granth Sahib performed at the Akal Takht, daily to recite for one month an extra *path* of the Japu, offer *karah prasad* of the value of Rs.125 and to clean the shoes of the *sangat* and dishes in the Guru ka Langar for five days. The Panj Piare exonerated Sant Fateh Singh, another political leader, of a similar charge saying that he had given up his fast, which preceded Master Tara Singh's, under the command of Panj Piare and the *sangat* in general, though he too was held guilty, along with eight members of the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, for acquiescing in Master Tara Singh breaking his fast. Fateh Singh was to recite for one month an additional *path* of the Japu and wash dishes in Guru ka Langar for five days. Other members of the Working Committee were to broom the Golden Temple precincts and clean dishes in Guru ka Langar for two days.

In 1984, Giani Zail Singh, then President of India, Buta Singh, a Central minister, and Santa Singh, leader of the Buddha Dal of Nihangs, were declared *tankhahias* by the Akal Takht, the first for allowing the army to march into the premises of Golden Temple in June 1984, and the other two for subsequently holding an unauthorized Sarbatt Khalsa meeting and taking up, on behalf of the government but against the wishes of the Sikh community, the reconstruction of the Akal Takht building. Giani Zail Singh, however, convinced the Panj Piare of his innocence and was pardoned. The other two failed to

submit their cases and were consequently excommunicated from the Panth. The institution of *tankhah* has thus served over generations to ensure religious integrity and discipline among Sikhs, at individual as well as at *panthic* level.

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Bb. S. N.

TATT KHALSA (**Sudarshan Singh**), lit. the Real or Pure Khalsa, as against the followers of Banda Singh Bahadur who came to be called Bandai Khalsa, was one of the factions in the schism which arose among the Sikhs after the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh, while sending Banda Singh to the Punjab in 1708 to lead the Sikhs, had abolished the line of living Gurus bequeathing spiritual guruship to Guru Granth Sahib. Banda Singh in the flush of initial victories made some innovations which appeared heretical to the orthodox Khalsa. Instead of the Sikh salutation of "Vahiguru Ji ka Khalsa, Vahiguru ji ka Fateh" he introduced "Fateh Darshan"; discarding the traditional blue dress of the Khalsa warriors he adopted garments of red colour; and what hurt the Sikhs most, he allowed his followers to treat him as *Guru*. Many Sikhs led by the veteran Binod Singh and his son, Kahn Singh, parted company with Banda Singh during his last defensive battle against the imperial army. They called themselves Tatt Khalsa, "ready" Khalsa. Banda Singh was put to death at Delhi in June 1716, but the schism persisted.

With the assassination of Emperor Farrukh-Siyar in 1719, persecution of the Sikhs slackened somewhat and they began to gather occasionally at Amritsar. The differences between the two groups increased with the Bandai Khalsa claiming 50 per cent of the income from offerings at the shrines and the Tatt Khalsa refuting the claim as entirely baseless. When this state of affairs was brought to the notice of Mata Sundari at Delhi, she despatched Bhai Mani Singh with six other Sikhs for the management of the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, and enjoined that the entire income should be spent on Guru ka Langar. Matters came to a head on the occasion of Baisakhi in 1721 when the Bandais made fortifications around their camp and prepared for a confrontation. However, on

Bhai Mani Singh's mediation both parties agreed to seek guidance from the Guru. Two slips of paper, one with the words "*Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa*, *Vahiguru ji ki Fateh*," written on it and the other with the words "*Fateh Darshan*", were dropped into the sacred pool. Whichever slip came up on the surface first was to indicate the Guru's verdict. It so happened that the slip Bearing "*Vahiguru ji ki Fateh*" surfaced first. Many Bandais bowed their heads and came over to the camp of the Tatt Khalsa, but some questioned the propriety of the procedure adopted. It was then decided to settle the issue through a wrestling bout. The bout was held in front of the Akal Takht between Miri Singh, son of Baba Kahn Singh, leader of the Tatt Khalsa, and Sangat Singh, son of Lahaura Singh Bandai. Miri Singh won and the Tatt Khalsa was again declared the winner. The bulk of the Bandai Sikhs joined the Tatt Khalsa and a few who remained adamant were driven away. Although the name of the sect, Tatt Khalsa, became redundant thereafter, the words continued to be used especially in the Singh Sabha days, to denote Sikhs fully committed and ever prepared for action in behalf of the community. This was in contrast to *dhillar* (Sikhs) connoting indolent, passive or ineffectual.

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Sd. S.

TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL (**K. T. Lalwani**), doctrine of rebirth based on the theory that an individual soul passes at death into a new body or new form of life. Central to the concept is the principle of universal causality; i.e. a person must receive reward or punishment if not here and now then in a subsequent birth, for his actions in the present one. The soul, it is held, does not cease with the physical body, but takes on a new birth in consequence of the person's actions comprising thoughts, words and deeds. The cumulative effect of these determines his next existence. Attached to worldly objects, man will continue in the circuit of birth-death-rebirth until he attains spiritual liberation, annulling the effect of his past actions.

Belief in reincarnation is basic to the eschatology of all religions of Indian origin. Some Western philosophers of yore also believed in the transmigration of soul, but for them it was associated with the concept of the immortality of soul. In Indian tradition, on the other hand, transmigration is an essential concomitant of the doctrine of *karma*, according to which every action, physical or mental, has its own consequence which must be faced immediately or in future, either in this life or in the hereafter, good actions leading to a favourable reward and bad actions entailing punishment. The individual soul (*jvatma*), so it is believed, does not perish with the physical body but dons a new corporeal vesture in a new birth which is determined by its *karma* in the preceding births. Every new birth in its turn necessarily involves new *karma* or action leading to further consequences. *Jivatma* is thus tied to a *karmik chakra* or an endless cycle of birth-action-death-rebirth, until the chain is broken and *karmik* accumulation is dissipated and the *jiva* attains *mukti* or *moksa*, i.e. liberation or release from transmigration.

The origin of the idea of transmigration is traced back to the post-Vedic period. The early Aryans simply believed that good men ascended to heaven to join company with the gods while the souls of the wicked sank down into the abyss of hell. The postulate that there is no unmerited happiness and unmerited misery and that the individual soul takes after death a new existence during which it reaps what, good or bad, it had sown earlier was first propounded in the *Satpatha Brahmana*, one of the several commentaries that preceded the appearance of the Upanisads. Since then in India the highest spiritual goal has been the release of the *jivatma* from the cycle of birth and death or *avagaman* (lit. coming and going). Different traditions within the Indian religious systems offer different analyses and correspondingly different solutions. One view is that since transmigration is subject to *karma* or actions, the cycle can be broken only through the annihilation or *karma*. Various methods have been suggested to achieve this end such as renunciation, non-action, ritualism and *gian* (*jnana*) or philosophical and metaphysical knowledge.

The doctrines of transmigration of soul and *karma* are accepted in the Sikh system, but with significant individual shades and emphases. *Karma*, it is true, determines its own consequence: *jehe karma kamai teha hoisi*—as one acts so shall one be (GG, 730). However, *karma* as part of the Divine Order (*hukam*) is a natural compulsion and hence is unavoidable. What is needed, therefore, is not annihilation of *karma* through non-action, but doing good deeds and avoiding evil ones. Men are naturally endowed with power to discriminate between good and evil. Human life is on this account a valuable chance not to be frittered away. Guru Nanak warns*: suni suni sikh hamari sukritu kita rahasi mere jiare bahuri na avai vari*—Listen, listen to my advice, O

my Mind! Only good deeds shall endure, and there may not be another chance (GG, 154). Says Guru Arjan: "*milu jagadis milan ki baria chirankal ih deh sanjaria*—do meet the Lord of the Universe, for now is the time. After ages (passing through many different forms) have you attained the gift of human life" (GG, 176). Here in the world man has the opportunity to achieve ethical perfection, cherish the Lord and earn final release.

Secondly, what lies at the root of the problem is not *karma*, but *haumai*, i.e. egoity or the sense of I-ness. *Jivatma* (individual soul) is a spark or ray of the Ineffable Spirit, Paramatma, and its deliverance lies in its reunion with its source. What hinders such reunion is the *jiva's* egoism. The *jiva* confined in its narrow shell and devoid of understanding of the infiniteness of Reality claims for itself a separate, individuated existence. It is *haumai* that robs a *jiva's karma* or potential merit. Even the holiest of acts would not avail when accompanied by *haumai* or self-conceit. Says Guru Arjan, Nanak V: "*jo jo karam kie hau haumai te te bhae ajae*—All actions performed in ego go waste," (GG, 999) and "*apas kau karamvantu kahavai, janami marai bahu joni bhramavai*—As long as he (*jiva*) thinks he is the doer, so long shall he continue wandering through wombs and births" (GG, 278). What is needed is not annihilation of *karma*, but the conquest of *haumai*. This is done through right understanding of *hukam* (Divine Order), and the *sabad* (Divine Word) itself. As says Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, "*ham kia ham karahage ham murakh gavar karnaivala visaria dujai bhai piaru*—Utterly misguided are they who, filled with ego lay out many claims for what has been done and for what remains to be done, forgetting the one who guides all of our actions, and falling a prey to illusion and duality" (GG, 39). When *haumai* is overcome and actions are dedicated to God, individuation ceases and the soul merges into the Absolute Beings.

Another Sikh principle having bearing on the concept of transmigration is that of *nadar*. Divine Order (*hukam*) although generally immutable is yet tempered by *nadar* or Divine Grace. The law of transmigration of soul, too, does not condemn a soul to irrevocable predestination and eternal *karmik chakra*. God's *nadar* (lit. favourable glance) can at any stage redeem a soul and release it forever from the circuit of *avagaman* or transmigration. *Mukti* or deliverance from the bondage of birth and death, according to Sikh belief, is not contingent upon the end to the present life. With God's grace one can be a *jivan-mukta*, emancipated while still living. What is required of the seeker of *nadar* is to behave and act in such a way that he qualifies himself for His grace. Thus while *karma* is necessary and good deeds helpful, liberation finally comes through *nadar*. Says Guru Nanak in the Japu, "*karmi avai kapra nadari mokhu duaru*—body is determined by *karma*, but through *nadar* is found the door to liberation" (GG, 2).

There is nothing dreadful as such about birth and death, i.e. transmigration, although to transcend the cycle is ever the soul's goal. Birth and death are part of *hukam* and are to be accepted as His *raza* or Will. Guru Nanak says: "*jammanu marna hukamu pachhanu*—know that birth and death are by His *hukam* alone," (GG, 412). Again, "*jammanu marana hukamu hai bhanai avai jai*— birth and death are by His *hukam*; by His Will does one come and go" (GG, 472). Besides being in tune with the Divine Will and practising humility and truth, the *jiva* is urged, in Sikhism, to take shelter in *nam* or *sabda*. Without savouring *nam* one wanders endlessly from birth to birth. Says Guru Nanak "*gur kau jani na janai kia tisu chaju acharu andhulai namu visaria manmukhi andh gubaru avanu janu na chukai mari janamai hoi kahuaru*—They who have not cherished the Guru nor realized *nam* will continue to transmigrate" (GG, 19).

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K. T. L.

TURBAN (**Piara Singh Sambhi**), derived from the ancient Persian word *dulband* through the Turkish *tarbush*, is a long scarf wrapped around the head. It is a common head-dress for men in Middle Eastern and South-Asian countries. As a form of head-dress, it is of semitic origin and was an essential part of the Israeli High Priest's uniform in Moses' day, 1300 BC, as stated in the Old Testament (Exodus, 28: 4). In India, it is to be seen as worn by men depicted in the Ajanta caves (200 BC) and on the Sanchi Gateway (150 BC). Traditionally, wearing of turban was a sign of holiness, and frequently, its size, material and style indicated the position and rank of the wearer. The Sanskrit word *pak*, from which the Punjabi *pagg*, or turban, is obviously derived, stands for maturity and greyness of hair. Punjabi idiom and usage also testify to the importance of turban as a symbol of respectability. For example, *pagg di laj rakkhna*, lit. to maintain the honour of the turban, means to behave in a socially proper manner; *pagg lahuna*, lit. to knock off the turban, means to insult; and *pag vatauna*, lit to exchange turbans, signifies the transformation of friendship into brotherhood vowing fraternal love and loyalty. Until recent times wearing of a head-dress, turban or cap, usually of the former, by all men from boyhood onwards was almost universal in the Punjab. Even now customs persist preserving the importance of turban in Punjabi society and culture. A bridegroom, irrespective of the religious tradition he belongs to, would as a rule wear a turban on his wedding day. A turban is ceremonially presented to and worn by the son at the end of the obsequies in honour of a deceased parent. Turban is the coveted prize during wrestling matches.

While other communities in the Punjab have gradually discarded the wearing of turban generally under the influence of western culture, for the Sikhs it has a religious

significance. In fact, along with untrimmed hair, turban has become a distinguishing feature of the Sikh male the world over. The Gurus wore turbans, and their disciples naturally followed them. Guru Arjan (1563-1606) describing a true man of God had mentioned turban being a part of an ideal appearance (GG, 1084). By the time of the Sixth Master, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), turban wearing Sikhs began to think themselves equals of the beturbaned ruling class, the Mughals. When in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) manifested the Khalsa; he included the *kes* or hair, and *kangha* or comb, among the five K's or mandatory symbols of the faith to be worn by all Sikhs. Turban, being essential to keep the hair neatly tied up, thus became an obligatory item of dress for the Sikh male. The women continued to keep their hair combed downwards and covered with a flowing scarf, although some of them particularly those joining the fighting Nihang order, also donned turbans like the males. The use of a cap or *tarbush* below the turban is not permitted the Sikhs. Instead, a shorter and lighter piece of cloth is normally used as an under-turban. The shape or style and colour of the turban allow for individual taste. However, particular styles and colours have come to be adopted by followers of certain sects. The Nihangs, for instance, carry blue or yellow turbans spun around their heads in a conical shape, whereas the Namdharis invariably wear white in a flat, coif-like style. The newly-emerged community of American Sikhs has also taken to white headgear for men as well as for women. The Nirmalas wear ochre and members of the political party, the Akali Dal, generally deep blue or black. A style becoming popular with the youth is the turban wrapped a bit bulkily, but sprucely, to a sharp, high frontal point, imparting to it a regal look. This came from the court of the Sikh Maharaja of Patiala. Another distinctive mode is marked by the Sikh army soldier's

turban with its neatly arranged emphatic folds. Geography demarcates turban styles too, more among the common people.

For Sikhs, the use of turban excludes the wearing of a cap. In India, Sikh riders of motorcycles are exempt from wearing crash helmets. Similarly, a Sikh soldier would not wear a steel helmet even under shelling or firing. However, in some foreign countries the compulsion of wearing a turban, like the wearing of long, untrimmed hair, has sometimes led to the Sikhs being placed in a position of conflict with employers or even governments whose rules or laws require the wearing of a cap or helmet. The turban being religiously obligatory for the Sikhs, a more tolerant view has begun to be taken recently. For example, the Motor Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption) Act passed in British Parliament in 1976 exempts "any follower of the Sikh religion while he is wearing a turban" from having to wear a crash helmet. Similarly, the highest court of the country in the United Kingdom, the House of Lords, has ruled that Sikh drivers and conductors of public vehicles are not to be compelled to wear caps. Similarly in Canada in 1986 Sikhs in Metro Toronto Police were permitted to wear turbans while on duty, and since 1990 turbaned Sikhs may join The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

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P. S. S.

UNTOUCHABILITY AND SIKHISM (**G. S. Talib**), a feature of the caste system prevalent in Hindu society since time immemorial, reduces certain classes and castes to a very low level in the social scale. The caste system, the origins of which can be traced to the Purusa Sukta, hymn 90, of the tenth book of the Rgveda, had, by the time of the Epics, become an inalienable part of the Varnasrama Dharma of the Aryans. While Buddhism disapproved of caste distinctions, the *Bhagavad gita* (IV. 13) confers divine sanction on the caste system. Again, *Bhagavad-gita* implies the distribution of human beings into castes in accordance with their *guna* or qualities and *karma* or actions. The lowest caste, the Sudras, were permanently relegated to the lowest position, their divinely ordained *dharma* or duty being to serve the *dvijas* or twice-born as the three upper classes, Brahmans, Ksatriyas and Vaisyas, were collectively designated. Even among the Sudras there were two different categories: the untouchables whose very touch or even proximity supposedly caused pollution to the upper-caste Hindus, and others who, though looked down upon and depressed, were yet tolerated and not considered untouchables. The latter comprised craftsmen and menials such as carpenters, barbers, water-carriers and cooks, while the former sometimes referred to as *pancham*, the fifth caste, included scavengers, cobblers, skinners of dead animals and others who extracted alcoholic spirits and were given the despicable name of *chandals*. The untouchables were compelled to live in utter poverty and sub-human conditions in separate unsanitary colonies or wards on the outskirts of villages or outside the city walls.

There is no place for untouchability in Sikhism. Both the precept and practice of the Gurus condemned it along with the rest of the caste-system. “All ideas of contamination of pollution by touch are superstition,” said Guru Nanak. He decried the

hypocrisy of the Brahman who would not hesitate to eat the flesh of a goat killed to the accompaniment of a Muslim's formula but would consider the entry of another person in their cooking square as contaminating (GG, 472). Elsewhere he says: "Evil thinking, hard-heartedness, slander, anger—these be the real untouchables. How may one's cooking square be unpolluted with these four seated along side" (GG, 91). Towards the so-called low-caste untouchables, on the other hand, the Gurus looked with compassion and preached the ennobling remedy of devotional worship of God. Guru Nanak said, "Nanak is on the side of the lowest of the low-castes, and doth not envy the company of those highly placed. Thy benevolent glance, O Lord, falleth where the lowly are cherished" (GG, 15). Guru Arjan, who without discrimination included the hymns of saints coming from the so-called low-castes in the Sikh Scripture, in his homage to the outcaste devotees of God, expressed himself thus: "One of a despised caste, unknown, unrecognized, through devotion shall be honoured in all four directions. . . Such a one whose very touch is (now) avoided, shall have his feet scrubbed and washed by the whole creation" (GG, 386).

Hindu orthodoxy and practice of untouchability had never been strong in the Punjab, which being a frontier state was more open to the social egalitarianism of Islam. Yet in order to give a concrete shape to the rejection of untouchability, the Gurus established the twin institutions of *sangat* fellowship) and *pangat* (commensality) which allow no difference between man and man on the grounds of caste, creed, colour, sex or social status. When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa through the rites sanctified by ceremonies of the sword, he introduced the practice of making all novitiates during the initiation to sip *amrit* and eat *karah prasad* from the same bowl. The peculiar

circumstances of the eighteenth century and the subsequent Sikh rule gave rise to a semi-Sikh priestly class which took over control of Sikh theology and liturgy and brought back several non-Sikh rituals and practices including caste distinction and even, to some extent, untouchability. The Singh Sabha movement of the last quarter of the nineteenth century strove, with considerable success, to restore the old purity of religious thought and practice. A severe blow to untouchability was, however, dealt on 12 October 1920 when members of the Khalsa Baradari, an organization of the so-called low-caste Sikhs, supported by progressive and reformist elements, entered the Harimandar at Amritsar and their offerings and *ardas* were accepted and shared by those present.

There are other factors too which have helped to loosen the stranglehold of untouchability even on Hindu society.

The efflorescence of Bhakti movement and the *sant* tradition from the fourteenth century onwards had already thrown up a galaxy of holy men belonging to the low and untouchable castes.

One of them, Kabir, had bluntly challenged the Brahman to prove his claim to superiority over Sudras simply on the grounds of birth. “There is no caste or clan in the womb,” says Kabir, “all creation is from the Divine seed. Tell me Pandit! Since when have you become a Brahman. If you claim to be a Brahman by birth from a Brahman woman, why didn’t you choose a different path to come into the world? How are you Brahman and we Sudras? Do you have milk in your veins against blood in ours? He alone is called a Brahman among us who meditates upon Brahman, the Supreme Being” (GG, 324). Spread of liberal education and general awareness, rise of liberal religious movements of the nineteenth century, modern means of travel (trams, trains, buses where

inter-caste bodily contact or proximity is unavoidable), and the introduction of democracy and universal adult suffrage equating the lowest with the highest in voting strength are some of the other factors that militated against the practice of untouchability. Under the Constitution of India the practice of untouchability is legally abolished. Article 17 in Part III, "Fundamental Rights," of the Constitution of India reads: "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of 'untouchability' shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law."

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G. S. T.

VAHIGURU (**G. S. Talib**) also spelt and pronounced Vahguru, is the distinctive name of the Supreme Being in the Sikh dispensation, like Yahweh in Judaism and Allah in Islam. In Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, the term does not figure in the compositions of the Gurus, though it occurs therein, both as Vahiguru and Vahguru, in the hymns of Bhatt Gayand, the bard contemporary with Guru Arjan, Nanak V (1553-1606), and also in the *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas. Guru Gobind Singh, Nanak X (1666-1708), used Vahiguru in the invocatory formula (Ik Onkar Sri Vahiguru ji ki Fateh, besides the traditional Ik Onkar Satigur Prasadi) at the beginning of some of his compositions as well as in the Sikh salutation (Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh varied as Sri Vahiguru ji ki Fateh). Bhai Gurdas at one place in his *Varan* (I.49) construes *vahiguru* as an acrostic using the first consonants of the names of four divine incarnations of the Hindu tradition appearing in four successive eons. Some classical Sikh scholars, such as Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh and Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, taking this poetic interpretation seriously, have traced the origin of the term in ancient mythology. Modern scholars, however, affirm that the name Vahiguru is owed originally to the Gurus, most likely to the founder of the faith, Guru Nanak, himself. According to this view, Vahiguru is a compound of two words, one from Persian and the other from Sanskrit, joined in a symbiotic relationship to define the indefinable, indescribable Ultimate Reality. *Vah* in Persian is an interjection of wonder and admiration, and *guru* (Sanskrit *guru*: heavy, weighty, great, venerable; a spiritual parent or preceptor) has been frequently used by Guru Nanak and his successors for *satiguru* (True Guru) or God. Bhai Santokh Singh, in *Sri Gur Nanak Prakash* (pp. 1249-51), reporting Guru Nanak's testament to the Sikhs has thus explicated Vahiguru: *Vah* is wonder at the Divine might; *gu* is spiritual darkness

while *ru* is illumination brought to eliminate this darkness. Cumulatively, the name implies wonder at the Divine Light eliminating spiritual darkness. It might also imply, "Hail the Lord whose name eliminates spiritual darkness." Earlier, Bhai Mani Singh, *Sikhan di Bhagat Mala*, gave a similar explication, also on the authority of Guru Nanak. Considering the two constituents of Vahiguru (vahi + guru) implying the state of wondrous ecstasy and offering of homage to the Lord, the first one was brought distinctly and prominently into the devotional system by Guru Nanak, who has made use of this interjection, as in *Majh ki Var* (stanza 24), and *Suhi ki Var*, *sloka* to *pauri* 10.

Apart from the use of this interjection, the attitude of wonder and total submission at the sight of Divine Greatness is prominently visible in Guru Nanak as evidenced for example in the hymn in Dhanasari: "*gagan mai thalu ravi chandu dipak bane tarika mandal janak moti* (GG, 663); in measure Suhi: "*kaun taraji kavanu tula tera kavanu saraphu bulava*" (GG, 730); and in Japu: "*kete pavan pani vaisantar kete kan mahes, kete barame gharati ghariahi rup rang ke ves*" (GG, 7). In *Asa ki Var* (GG, 462-75) the opening *sloka* to *pauri* 3 is woven round *vismad—vismadu nad vismadu ved*, wondrous is the sound, wondrous the wisdom. Wonder and ecstasy are expressed at the cosmic order and its mystery full of contradictions, yet all comprehended in the Divinely-appointed system. This *sloka* concludes with: "Ever present to our gaze is wonder. At the sight of this mystery are we wonderstruck. Only by supreme good fortune is it unravelled." In the opening *sloka* to *paruri* 4—*bhai vichi pavanu vahai sadvau*, in (the Lord's) fear bloweth the wind with its myriad breezes—is expressed wonder at the cosmic "fear" under which the universe operates in obedience to the Divine Law, the Lord alone being exempt from such fear.

In *Japu*, besides other themes, one that stands out prominent is wonder at the cosmic order, its infinitude and the mystery of its moral élan. As a matter of fact, the theme of *Japu* may be said to be what occurs in the course of stanza 4: *vadiai vicharu* (contemplation of Divine infinity). In stanza 16, for example, is the expression of wonder at the limitlessness of space. Stanzas 17-19, each beginning with *asankh* (infinite), are uttered in the same mood.

In stanza 22—*patala patal lakh agasa agas*, countless the worlds beneath, countless the worlds above—is a vision of the limitlessness of the universe. So are stanzas 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 34, 35 and 36. It is in response to this overwhelming vision of Guru Nanak that the unique Name of the Supreme Being, Vahiguru, originated. No other name could have been adequate to express what in his vision he found lying at the heart of the cosmos, compelling a response in the human self attuned to devotion and ecstasy.

Guru Amar Das has also employed the term in *Gujari ki Var* (GG, 514-16) and in Astpadis in Malar (GG. 1277). In the former, it is calculated that the interjection *vahu-vahu* (Hail, hail the Lord) is used as many as 96 times. The interjection *vahu* (hail, wondrous is the Lord) occurs in Guru Ram Das in conjunction with Satiguru (compounded from Guru) in *sloka* 2 in *Sloka Varan te Vadhik* (GG, 1421). In Guru Arjan by whose time the formulation *Vahiguru* appears to have become current and acquired distinctiveness as the Name Divine, the phrase 'Gur Vahu' figures in Asa measure (GG, 376). This is only as inverted form of Vahiguru and has the same force and significance. Kavi Santokh Singh in *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj* Granth (p. 5686) uses the two terms as synonymous: "*simrahu vahiguru guru vahi*, or contemplate ye Vahiguru, the Lord all hail."

The earliest use of *Vahiguru*, in this form, is traceable to *Varan* by Bhai Gurdas and to Gayand's hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib. In both it may be said to have occurred contemporaneously, for while no date can be assigned to Bhai Gurdas' *Varan*, the work may be assumed to have appeared soon after the compilation of the Scripture in 1604, being so much alive with its spirit and phraseology. Gayand in the course of his lines encomiastic of Guru Ram Das (GG. 1403) made use of Vahiguru as the supreme Name Divine in recognition of the primacy and appeal it had by then come to acquire in the Sikh tradition. In this Savaiyya numbered 11, the term occurs twice as Vah Guru. Earlier in that numbered 6, it is repeated thrice as *Vahiguru* in the opening line, expressing fervour of devotion. So also in the concluding line of Savaiyya 7. In Savaiyya 12, Vahu Vahu (Wonder, personifying the Lord) signifies the Supreme marvel, embracing the infinitude of the universe. In Savaiyya 13, this name is used twice once as Vahiguru in the opening line and Vah Guru in the last line. In the concluding line of Savaiyya 8, Vahiguru is used thrice, concluding with the interjection Vahi (Hail).

Some relevant lines from Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, may also be reproduced here: *vahiguru guru sabadu lai piram piala chupi chabola*, putting faith in Vahiguru, the Master's teaching, the seeker drains in peace and tranquillity the cup of devotion (IV. 17); "*paunu guru gursabadu hai vahiguru gur sabadu sunaia, paun—guru* is the Master's word wherethrough he imparted the holy name Vahiguru (VI. 5); *vahiguru salahna guru sabadu alae*, to laud the Lord let me give utterance to the Master's Word (IX. 13); *satiguru purakh daial hoi vahiguru sachu mantra sunaia*, the holy Master in his grace imparted to the seeker the sacred incantation Vahiguru (XI. 3); *nirankaru akasu kari joti Sarup anup dikhaia, bed kateb agochara vahiguru gursabadu sunaia*, the

Formless Lord manifesting himself granted sight of His unique effulgent self and imparted to the seeker the Word Vahiguru, that is beyond the ken of Vedas and the Muslim Scriptures" (XII. 17); *vahiguru gurmantra hai japi haumai khoi,* Vahiguru is the Master's incantation. By repeating it egoism is cast out (XIII. 2); *dharamsal kartarpuru sadh sangati sachkhandu vasaia, vahiguru gur sabadu sunaia*, Guru Nanak in the temple at Kartarpur established the Realm Eternal as the holy congregation, and imparted to it the Divine Word Vahiguru (XXIV. 1*); sati namu karta purakhu vahiguru vichi ridai samae*, let the seeker lodge in his heart the holy Name, the creator immanent, Vahiguru" (XL. 22). In these verses, Vahiguru signifies the supreme name Divine, to which devotion may be offered. It is transcendent and annular of sin and evil, thus combining in itself the 'attributed' and the 'unattributed' aspects in consonance with the Sikh doctrine voiced in the Scripture. The main point is that by Guru Arjan's time and after, this name over all others was established as the object of devotion. The term received the final seal in the time of Guru Gobind Singh.

Vahiguru is for Sikhs the *gurmantra* (invocatory formula received from the guru) or *nam* for repetition (silently or aloud, with or without a rosary) and meditation upon the Supreme Reality. Bhai Gurdas in his *Varan* refers to it variously as *japu mantra* (invocation for repetition), *guru sabadu* (the Guru's Word), *sachu mantra* (true *mantra*) and *gurmantra*. It is also called *nam* (the Name), and is sometimes compounded as "Satinam-Vahiguru" to be chanted aloud in congregations. *Nam japna* (repeated utterance of God's Name, i.e. Vahiguru) is one of the three cardinal moral principles of Sikhism, the other two being *kirat karni* or honest labour and *vand chhakna* or sharing one's victuals with the needy. Since the manifestation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind

Singh in 1699, Vahiguru has been part of the Sikh salutation: Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Vahiguru ji ki Fateh (Hail the Khalsa who belongs to the Lord God! Hail the Lord God to whom belongs the victory! !). It has since also been the *gurmantra* imparted formally at initiation to the novitiate by the leader of the Panj Piare administering the rites.

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G. S. T.

VAHIGURU JI KA KHALSA VAHIGURU JI KI FATEH (**G. S. Talib**), form of Sikh salutation, was made current among the Sikhs by command of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of the manifestation of the Khalsa in 1699. The salutation used in the days of Guru Nanak was Sati Kartar (Hail the Creator, the Eternal). This is how he, according to the *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, his oldest biography, greeted those he met. Some accounts of his life, such as that by Hariji, mention other similar forms of greeting, one among those being Raja Ram Sati (Hail the Holy Creator!) In the *hukamnamas* or letters sent to *sangats* by the Gurus prior to Guru Gobind Singh's time, the opening greeting used to be: Guru Sati (Hail the Eternal Lord!) which is only an inverted form of Satiguru. Other forms of salutation such as Ram Sati (Hail God the Eternal!) and respectful salutations like Pairin-Pauna (I fall at thy feet) were also current among the generality of Sikhs. *Namaskar* (I bow to thee) was in use in greeting the holy, or offering worship to God. Such greetings are specifically mentioned or hinted at in the older writings.

With the development of the Sikh creed in the time of Guru Nanak's successors and the propagation of a new tradition basing itself on a monotheism whose roots, however, were Indian, as against the prevalent polytheism, pantheism and, at the higher levels, henotheism, a new terminology came into existence which distinguished the Sikh faith from the numerous creeds prevalent at the time. Names like Ik Onkar, Oankar, Parbrahm were favoured above others for the Godhead: Hari, Narayana and Rama acquired greater currency compared to other names drawn from mythology. But the particular names of God which constituted a kind of differentia of Sikh society were Nirankar (Formless), Kartar (Creator), Sachcha Patshah (True or Eternal King), Satiguru and Vahiguru. Guru is Lord, Master, and Vahiguru is expressive of wonder or ecstasy at

Divine infinitude or glory, with the implied sense of name. Vahiguru has become the most characteristic name for God in the Sikh creed, like Allah in Islam. It occurs in the Guru Granth Sahib (Savaiyyas, Mahala IV by Bhatt Gayand, page 1402) repeated ecstatically as a *mantra*. In the compositions of Guru Arjan (GG, 376), it is used in the inverted form as Gur Vahu. Bhai Gurdas in his *Varan* has used it as being synonymous with the Absolute, the Creator in a number of places (I. 49, IV. 17, VI. 5, IX. 13, XI. 3 & 8, XII. 17, XIII. 2, XXIV. 1. XL. 22). This prolific use by one whose philosophical exposition of Sikh metaphysics and mysticism is the earliest on record, indicates that by the time of Guru Arjan (the Savaiyyas referred to above were also composed by poets (Bhatts) attending on him). Vahiguru as the Sikh name for God was well established and had acquired the overtones which have since been associated with it as expression of the Sikh monotheistic affirmation of faith.

Because of this close and inalienable association, Guru Gobind Singh at the time of introducing the new form of initiation to the faith, with adjuration to the initiates to maintain a stern moral discipline and to cultivate qualities of crusaders and martyrs for the faith, administered the new faith in terms of the name of God which was held in the highest reverence in the tradition handed down to him. The new form of salutation, which annulled all the previous ones till then prevalent in Sikh society, was enunciation as Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh—the Khalsa is the Lord's own: to the Lord is the Victory. This two-fold affirmation was, in the first place, expression of a special relationship between God and those who dedicated their entire life to His service. Second, it was the expression of that faith in the ultimate triumph of the forces of Goodness which despite all apparent setbacks, trials and travail, is the just and essential

end of the fight between good and evil in the world. This faith has been asserted over and over again by Guru Nanak and his spiritual successors. After being administered *amrit* (water stirred with a two-edged dagger; sanctified by recitation of the Guru's word and thus transmuted into the elixir of immortality), each initiate was adjured to raise the affirmation, Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa Vahiguru ji ki Fateh! This was duly repeated, and the tradition continues till this day. Apart from being used as the affirmation of faith, this formula is also the orthodox, approved Sikh form of salutation.

Two terms in this formula need elucidation. Khalsa is an Arabic word, meaning, literally, 'pure' and used in the administration terminology of the Muslim State system in India for the lands or fiefs directly held by the sovereign and not farmed out to landlords on certain conditions of military service and of making over to the State a share of the produce. In the term *khalsa*, both these meanings are discerned. In one of Guru Hargobind's Hukamnamas and in one of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *khalsa* is used for the Guru's devotees, with the implication particularly as 'the Guru's Own!' As Guru Gobind Singh adopted the term and gave it centrality in the enunciation of the creed, the idea of purity perhaps came to acquire primacy. When Guru Gobind Singh sent a set of youths to Varanasi to study Sanskrit, they were given the appellation Nirmala which is the Sanskrit-based parallel to the Arabic khalsa. Nirmalas are now a Sikh sect, who have maintained traditions of high scholarship. Khalsa occurs also in the Guru Granth Sahib (GG, 654) where it is used in the sense of pure', 'emancipated.' This term appealed to Guru Gobind Singh as being truly expressive of the vision of a noble, heroic race of men that he was creating.

Fateh, *fatah* in Arabic, literally means opening or forcing the portal of a besieged fort, implying victory. It has been used in the Qura'n in the sense of victory, and one of the attributive names of God in the Muslim tradition is Fattah (lit. Opener, i.e. Vanquisher over all evil forces). While *jai*, *jaikar* have been used in the Sikh tradition for victory and are used thus even in the Dasam Granth, *jai* was dropped from the new Sikh tradition, though for shouts of victory the term *jaikara* has become firmly established. *Fateh* was adopted as the current popular term for triumph or victory and made part of the Sikh affirmation and salutation. *Fateh* as *fatih* occurs once in the Guru Granth Sahib "*phahe kate mite gavan fatih bhai mani jit*—the noose of Yama hath been cleft, transmigration hath ceased and, with the conquest of the self, true victory hath been achieved" (GG, 258). The implied meaning here is of a moral victory. *Jit*, a word from Indian tradition, like *jaikara* has got established also in Sikh tradition, and in the invocation Panth ki Jit (Victory of the Panth) is repeated in the Sikh collective prayer daily. Fateh nonetheless remains the prime Sikh term for victory, and has been repeated again and again in Sikh history, down from the Persian couplet put on Sikh coins (*Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-e-nusrat bedarang, yaft az* Nanak Guru Gobind Singh) to the common daily parlance of the Sikh people, wherein every success is designated as *fateh*.

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G. S. T.

VAK (**P. S. Sambhi**), from Sanskrit *vaka* (sounding, speaking; a text, recitation or formula) or *vakya* (speech, saying, statement, declaration, a sentence or period), has a special connotation in the Sikh system. In Sikh terminology, *Vak* means the command or lesson read from the Guru Granth Sahib. *Vak laina* or *hukam laina* (obtaining or receiving the Guru's word or command) is for the Sikhs tantamount to having a *darshan* or audience of the Guru Granth Sahib, ever-present Guru for them. It is an act of seeking the counsel or instruction of the Guru who 'speaks' through the *vak* or hymn recited aloud. Customarily, *vak* or *hukam* is recited in *sangat* by an officiant after the installation or opening of the Guru Granth Sahib in the morning and every time after *ardas* or supplicatory prayer is said at the end of the service. *Vak* or *hukam* may be read individually by the seeker from the Holy Book in the *gurdwara* or in his own home or he may request the *granthi* (officiant) or any one else present to read it out for him.

The *Sikh Rahit Maryada* or the code governing Sikh belief and practice published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, statutorily elected religious body representative of the entire Sikh community, lays down the following procedure under the head *hukam laina*:

5. To bow before the Guru Granth Sahib, respectfully to attend the *sangat* which truly represents the Guru, and to recite or listen to *vak* amounts to having the *darshan* or sight of the True Guru. To have a sight of the Guru Granth Sahib by uncovering it and then not to read the *vak* is *manmat* or self-willed transgression.

(b) During the congregation, only one thing should take place at a time—*kirtan*, discourse or scripture-reading.

(c) During the congregation, only a Sikh (man or woman) is entitled to sit in attendance of the Guru Granth Sahib.

(d) While any one, Sikh or non-Sikh, may read the Scripture for himself, only a Sikh should read it aloud for the *sangat*.

(e) For obtaining *vak*, the hymn at the top of the left hand page of Guru Granth Sahib opened at random should be read out from the beginning. If the beginning is at the preceding page, the leaf may be turned. A complete hymn should be read ending with the line where usually the name Nanak appears.

(f) Hukam should also be picked from the holy book at the end to mark the close of the ceremony.

Vak thus recited in slow rhythm and with correct intonation makes impact on the listeners. It is taken to be the Guru's command for the day. Historically, there have been instances when theological or even mundane disputes have been settled by having recourse to *vak*. For example, on 12 October 1920, when the priests of the Harimandar refused to accept the sacrament (*karah prasad*) brought by a group of the so-called low-castes, it was agreed to obtain the Guru's verdict. The priests agreed. As the custom goes, the Guru Granth Sahib was opened at random and the words read impromptu went unambiguously in favour of the reformers. This was accepted without argument and without question. Such reliance on *vak* arises from the belief of the devotees that the *bani* of Guru Granth Sahib is revelation enjoying Divine sanction.

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P. S. S.

WOMEN IN SIKHISM (**G. S. Talib**). Women who had many equal privileges with the menfolk in Vedic India were reduced to a position of utter subordination during the time of the lawgivers. In the codes and institutes laid down in the *dharmasastras* they were given the status of *sudras*. They were declared to be intrinsically impure and unfit, hence ineligible, even for listening to the recital of sacred texts and receiving religious instruction or initiation. The inherent attraction of the female was considered to be a temptation to sin, and man had to remain on guard all the time. Woman was *maya*, illusion; "nature had designed her for the enjoyment of man" and she had "no other function than to serve him."

With the Muslims came *pardah*, the veil, and *zananah*, confinement of womenfolk to the interior apartments. The female became a greater liability for the male of the invaded populace who, weakened economically, had not only to feed his female dependants but also to be ready to protect their honour and chastity in those troubled times. This, among other causes, social as well as cultural, led to the practice of female infanticide, as also of child marriage. The state of a widow was the most pitiable. Polygamy was permissible for man, but a woman could not remarry even after the death of her husband. The *smrtis* enjoined upon the widow to practise *sahamarana*, lit. simultaneous death, commonly known as *sati*, by burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. Where concession was made and the widow allowed to live on, being pregnant or having infant children, for instance, she remained ostracized from society, submitting herself to rigorous discipline of self-denial.

With the advent of Sikhism appeared a liberating force in Indian society. Affirmation of the dignity of the human being, male as well as female, was central to

Guru Nanak's teaching. His mystical vision of the immanence of the Creator in all of His creation was concretized in a forceful enunciation of the gospel of equality. Guru Nanak said that all creatures were equal before God and that to make distinctions among them on the grounds of birth or sex was sinful. For women especially, he had many bold and sympathetic words to say. Quoted most often in this respect are verses from *Asa ki Var*, a long composition sung in *sangat* in the morning service. "Of woman are we born, of woman conceived; to woman engaged, to woman married. Women are befriended, by woman is the civilization continued. When woman dies, woman is sought for. It is by woman that the entire social order is maintained. Then why call her evil of whom are great men born?"

In another stanza in *Asa ki Var*, Guru Nanak rejects the prevalent superstition of *sutak*, according to which a woman giving birth to a child remains in pollution for a given number of days, depending upon the caste to which she belongs. Pollution is not in childbirth, says Guru Nanak "Greed is the pollution of the mind; lying the pollution of the tongue; looking with covetousness upon another's wealth, upon another's wife, upon the beauty of another's wife the pollution of the eye; listening to slander the pollution of the ears. The pollution in which they commonly believe is all superstition. Birth and death are by Divine Will; by Divine Will men come and go" (GG, 472). As against celibacy and renunciation, Guru Nanak recommended *grhastha*, the life of a householder, in which husband and wife were equal partners. Fidelity was enjoined upon both. In the sacred verse, domestic felicity was presented as a cherished ideal and conjugal life provided a running metaphor for the expression of love for the Divine. Bhai Gurdas, poet of early Sikhism and authoritative interpreter of Sikh doctrine, pays high tribute to

womankind. "A woman," he says (Varan, V.16), "is the favourite in her parental home loved dearly by her father and mother. In the home of her in-laws, she is the pillar of the family, the guarantee of its good fortune. . . Sharing in spiritual wisdom and enlightenment and with noble qualities endowed, a woman, the other half of man, escorts him to the door of liberation."

To ensure equal status for women, the Gurus made no distinction between the sexes in matters of initiation, instruction or participation in *sangat*, holy fellowship, and *pangat*, commensality. According to Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, Guru Amar Das disfavoured the use of veil by women. He assigned women to the responsibility of supervising the communities of disciples in certain sectors, and preached against the custom of *sati*. Sikh history records the names of several ladies such as Mai Bhago, Mata Sundari, Rani Sahib Kaur, Rani Sada Kaur and Maharani Jind Kaur who played a leading role in the events of their time and left their imprint on them.

In the tumultuous decades of the eighteenth century when Sikhs went through fierce persecution, the women displayed exemplary steadfastness. Their deeds of heroism and sacrifice are to this day recounted morning and evening by the Sikhs in their *ardas*. "Our mothers and sisters," they repeat every time in their prayer, "who plied handmills in the jails of Mannu, the Mughal governor of Lahore (1748-53), grinding daily a maund-and-a-quarter of corn each, who saw their children being hacked to pieces in front of their eyes, but who uttered not a moan from their lips and remained steadfast in their Sikh faith—recall their spirit of fortitude and sacrifice, and say, Vahiguru, Glory be to God!"

Even in those days of severe trial and suffering, Sikhs were guided in their treatment of the womenfolk of enemy captured in battle by the highest standards of

chivalry. They showed towards them utmost respect. In AD 1763, for instance, one of Ahmad Shah Durrani's generals, Jahan Khan, was defeated by the Sikhs at Sialkot and a number of his female relations and dependants fell into their hands. "But" says 'Ali ud-Din, in his *'Ibratnamah*, "as the Sikhs of old would not lay their hands on women, they had them escorted safely to Jammu." Another Muslim chronicler, Ghulam Muhaiy ud-Din, vituperates the Sikhs in his *Fatuhat Namah-i-Samadi*, yet he does not fail to notice the esteem they had for women. "They (i.e. the Sikhs)," he records in his book, "look upon all women in the light of mothers." This is how a Sikh was defined by Bhai Gurdas a century earlier. He said, "A Sikh casting his eyes upon the handsome womenfolk of families other than his own regards them as his mothers, sisters and daughters."

Such being the respect for womanhood among the Sikhs, monogamy has been the rule for them, and polygamy a rare exception. Female infanticide is prohibited. The *Rahitnamas*, codes of conduct, prohibit Sikhs from having any contact or relationship with those who indulge in this practice. As for *sati* widow-burning, Scripture itself rejects it.

In a *sabda* (hymn) in measure Suhi, Guru Amar Das says, "*Satis* are not those that burn themselves on the husband's funeral pyre; *satis* are they, O Nanak, who die of the pangs of separation (GG, 787)". Stanza follows: "They, too be reckoned *satis* who live virtuously and contentedly in the service of the Lord, ever cherishing Him in their hearts". "Some", continues the *sabda*, "burn themselves along with their dead husbands: [but they need not, for] if they really loved them they would endure the pain alive." As a practical step towards discouraging the practice of *sati*, Sikhism permitted remarriage of widows.

In the present-day democratic system in India, women as a whole have been rid of many of their disabilities. They all enjoy political franchise and many new opportunities for advancement have opened up for them. Sikh women have shown enterprise in several fields and are among the most progressive in education and in the professions such as teaching and medicine. In the Sikh system, they are the equals of men in all respects. They can lead congregational services and participate in *akhand paths*, uninterrupted readings of scripture to be accomplished within forty-eight hours. They vote with men periodically to elect Sikhs' central religious body, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which administers their places of worship.

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G. S. T.

YOGA (**H. K. Kaul**), derived from Sanskrit root *yuj* having its equivalent in Latin as *jugum*, in Gothic as *juk*, in German as *jock*, is the equivalent of yoke in English. *Yoga* refers to yoking or harnessing of mind in order to cultivate *paravidya* or higher knowledge, the result of those psychical and physical processes which are employed to discover man's supreme inner essence through *samadhi*. *Samadhi* being the ultimate stage, certain other ascetic practices precede it in the different varieties of Yoga such as Mantra, Hatha, Laya and Rajyoga. Rajyoga or eight-limbed (*astang*) yoga is based on Patanjali's Yogasutras which are further rooted in the metaphysics of Sankhya system, sometimes held to be a pre-Aryan postulation. It is generally held that various yoga practices were in vogue before Patanjali who codified the scattered *sutras* into one treatise which later came to be known as *Yogasutras*, an authoritative critique on Yoga. Whether this Patanjali is the same man Patanjali, the grammarian, is a problem which still awaits solution. The constant activity of the mind being the major obstacle to realization, the Yoga has been defined as silencing of the mental ripplings—*yoga chittvrtti nirodha*.

In the *Bhagavad-gita*, various aspects of the term yoga such as *karmayoga*, *jnanayoga*, and *bhakti yoga* have been taken into account. Aurobindo saw a new vision and possibility of advancement in spiritual life through yoga. In view of the complete transformation of the 'being' wherein all the yogas are taken into consideration for reaching the superamental level, he calls his yoga as the integral yoga.

Equanimity of mind can be attained through different ways. On the basis of the degree of renunciation and control of body, yoga has been generally classified under four major heads: Mantrayoga, Hathayoga, Layayoga and Rajyoga. But these four or many other types of yoga are not totally compartmentalized spheres. They are rather closely

linked and overlap one another. Though yoga is a system which has a vast scope and variety yet the popularly known yoga is Hathayoga which professes the control of the different systems of the gross body in order to attain mastery over the subtle body.

In Mantrayoga this creation is held to be *namrupatmak* (full of names and forms) which is required to be deduced into one idea with the help of the *mantras* and then by entering into that idea the yogi can reach the final cause of the universe. Hindu scriptural science and idol worship much depend on this Mantrayoga. In Layayoga certain pressure points under the names of *chakras* are identified and the *kundalini* lying in the base lotus is harnessed to reach the last lotus, the *sahasrar*, situated in the uppermost region of the skull. This meeting of Sakti with the Siva in the skull is held to be conducive to the Mahalaya *samadhi* which is the aim of Layayoga. In *hathayoga*, gross-body-oriented exercises are undertaken and then the subtle body is mastered which being devoid of all filths of worldly passions comes face to face with the Supreme Reality. The chief practices of hathayoga are six practices (*sat karmas*), *asana, mudra, pratyahara*, *pranayama*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Analytical wisdom is the main force to be realized in Rajyoga, in which ripplings of the mind are to be silenced with the help of *yama* (don'ts), *niyama* (do's), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breath control), *pratyahara* (control and withdrawal of senses), *dhyana* (contemplation), *dharana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (superconscious absorption).

Yoga has much to do with a diseaseless body so that hard penances and physical exercises may be undertaken. *Yogasutras* being the authoritative work on yoga, other popular treatises on yoga are: *Goraksa Satak* by Gorakhnath, *Hathayoga Pradipika* by

Svatmarama, *Gheranda Samhita* by Gheranda, a Vaisnavite ascetic of Bengal and *Siva Samhita*, a tantric text.

Sikhism rejects the traditional forms and practices of yoga and teaches its followers the blessings of intense love and reverence for God. It teaches the brotherhood of mankind. Like true *karmayogis*, all Sikh Gurus led very active lives without any attachment to this world. Before the advent of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, many distortions of Patanjali's *Yogasutras* and *Hathayoga Pradipika* had been in vogue. By the time of the Gurus, yoga had been reduced to a mere instrument of earning *sidhis* and intimidating others in order to multiply the number of the followers. The Sikh Gurus have used the terminology of yoga in their verses and recognized the utility of self-realization but the methodology prescribed by them is that of *nam-simaran*, remembrance and praise of God rather than self-mortification. Gurbani primarily aims at the welfare of mankind. In *Jabala Upanisad*, *Goraksa Satak* and *Hathayoga Pradipika*, we do come across a detailed account of body-based six *chakras*, sixteen bases, nine doors, *pranayama* besides different types of vital air. Many hints about these ingredients of yoga are available in the Guru Granth Sahib also, but according to the Gurus, first of all, man is required to become *gurmukh* in order to unravel the mysteries of the universe and bear the unstruck sound of the word after rising above the nine outlets. A spiritually blind man cannot remove the dirt of the mind even with frequent baths and mortificational yogic exercises (GG, 1343). Guru Nanak says that observance of six-fold actions, Vedas, Samrti, reading of Sastras, yogic exercises and pilgrimage are useless and this can push an adherent into hell if he does not enshrine love of God in his heart (GG, 1124). Guru

Gobind Singh also pays court to this fact in the *Akal Ustati* included in the *Dasam Granth*.

A description of six *chakras* exists in Gurbani. There is also reference in it to the "upside down" lotus. When this "upside down" lotus blooms, God realization takes place (GG, 108). Guru Nanak says that this lotus blooms when all the four kinds of fire—violence, selfishness, anger and greed—are extinguished by remembering God and the *sadhak* experiences the ecstasy by drinking nectar of *nam*. The description of navel-lotus is given in detail in *Sidh Gosti* where Guru Nanak regards this navel-lotus as the abode of *prana vayu*, the vital breath. Where *yogasutra* is based on the metaphysics of the Sankhya, and lays emphasis on the dissociation or the negation of one's self from the *Prakrti* or the worldly activities in order to attain the *kaivalya* or aloneness, the Gurus have accepted the household-life as most fulfilling because only through it one can remain in touch with the world. The attainment of *nidhis-sidhis* which was the principal aim of the yogis in the medieval period, has also been rejected in Sikhism. Self-realization through devotion and the conquest of ego have been applauded.

Both Yoga and Sikhism are essentially mystical faiths. While Yoga is mysticism without social and cultural roots, Sikhism is firmly embedded in society as well as in the world. A Sikh mystic aspires to spiritual perfection to serve the cause of Truth and God, to justify His ways to men, and to bear testimony to His existence, grace and love.

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